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Faith in Action for Social Justice

Guess Who's Minding the Ballot Box

The five-point plan to resuscitate JIM CROW.

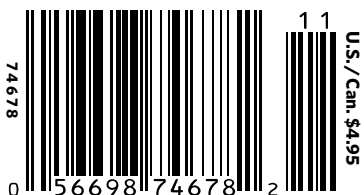


PLUS:

Shane Claiborne on the end of the death penalty

Standing Rock protest: What would Sitting Bull do?

A black woman's journey with depression and faith





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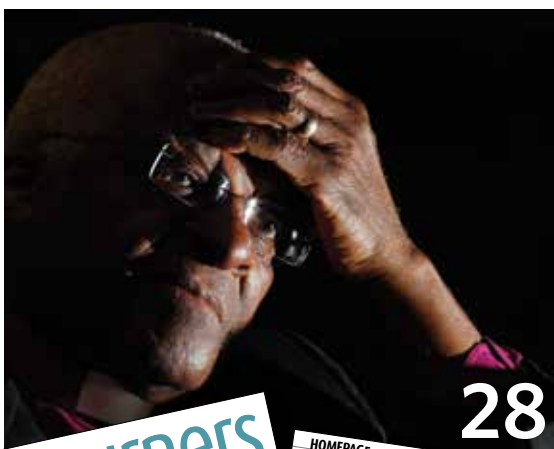
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ELECTIONS PRESENT an interesting challenge for many nonprofits in this country, and we're no exception. As Jim Wallis explains in "Hearts & Minds," Sojourners is incorporated under a part of the IRS code that disallows any participation "in any campaign activity for or against political candidates." But even while following that stricture, we are exceedingly aware that elections matter. While no political party, ideology, or candidate has a corner on the truth, election results have a huge effect on the issues at the heart of our mission, from poverty and race to immigration, climate change, and peace.

In our cover feature, "How to Preserve White Supremacy," Wallis reminds us that we shouldn't take our participation in elections for granted. Citing tactics such as

gerrymandering and new voter-ID laws that have deliberately made it harder for poor people and minorities to cast a ballot, Wallis calls on Christians to see attacks on voting rights as "a fundamental moral issue, not just a political one," because such endeavors attempt to disenfranchise the very people that Jesus calls us to defend: those who are marginalized and vulnerable.

IF THERE'S one thing you learn from reading through each issue of *Sojourners*, we hope it's that social change happens in many different ways. Sometimes it's through initiatives launched by people of faith, other times through elections, public policy, or nonviolent civil disobedience. As Christians, we see

this diversity as evidence of a creative God who delights in using ordinary people to bring the kingdom of God to life in surprising ways.

But as Catherine Woodiwiss explains in this issue, the common denominator in every kind of social change is communal action. "Justice requires participation," she writes. This isn't merely about being good citizens; just as a strong democracy requires civic engagement, being the body of Christ means that we are the hands and feet of Jesus at work in the world. And while there are all kinds of ways to do God's work, we have one idea for how U.S. Christians can participate this November: Vote! ■

Letters

Unchaining Hope

Thank you for uplifting one of North America's most prophetic and inspirational persons of our time, Daniel Berrigan, SJ ("The Unchained Life of Daniel Berrigan," August 2016). He was one of the most hopeful people for change in a time and an era when many of us felt little hope for change in the status quo. I never met him personally but was inspired by both who he was as a person and his commitment to a theology of personal involvement and activism for peacemaking.

John Fogleman
Ontario, Canada

Shame and Blame

Jim Wallis' analysis of "intersectionality" ("The Categories That Divide Humanity," July 2016) felt to me like an attack on local, traditional cultures, particularly those that are "white." As a lifelong rural pastor, I know well the propensity of rural communities toward ethnocentrism. And within the context of American society, all white traditional cultures certainly bear the burden of racism. But the solution is not to dismantle all local, traditional cultures, but to fashion communities that value their heritage along with the heritage of all other cultures. Wallis' shame-and-blame language not only fails to effect positive

The overwhelming bulk of what we hear to justify guns is fear-mongering.

change in local, traditional cultures but also may well be the kind of "politically correct" discourse that drives traditional "whites" to embrace political demagogues.

S. Roy Kaufman
Freeman, South Dakota

Quakers in the "Powder Keg"

I enjoyed Julianne Gage's article ("Making Peace in a Powder Keg," June 2016) very much, especially her report on the activities of Naomi Mwangi. It is interesting to me, a Quaker, that there are more Quakers in Kenya than in any other African country, and in fact more than 153,000—a considerable group in any nation. I have met with Quaker representatives from Kenya here in the U.S. who were attending meetings of the Philadelphia yearly meeting. It is my impression that Kenyan Quakers would be interested in supporting the work of the young activist who is described in Gage's article.

Alice Hoffman
via email

Concealed Fear

Is there a difference between "fear" and "concern that triggers action" ("Should

Christians Own Guns?" by Rob Schenk, May 2016)? Of course there is. The Bible is chock-full of injunctions—"do not fear," "do not be afraid," "don't worry," and so forth. These are littered through both the Old and New Testaments, including numerous times by Jesus in the gospels. But it is clear that God is not allowing us a lackadaisical attitude of unconcern. Jesus counters the world's system of hyping fear as a motivator. "Look at the flowers," Jesus says. The call is not to make us lazy, but to counter fear-mongering. My experience is that the overwhelming bulk of what we hear to justify guns for self-defense is fear-mongering.

Steve Goering
Facebook comment

Correction: "A Veterans Day Confession for America," a sermon by Chris Antal referenced in our September-October issue, was preached in 2012, not 2016.

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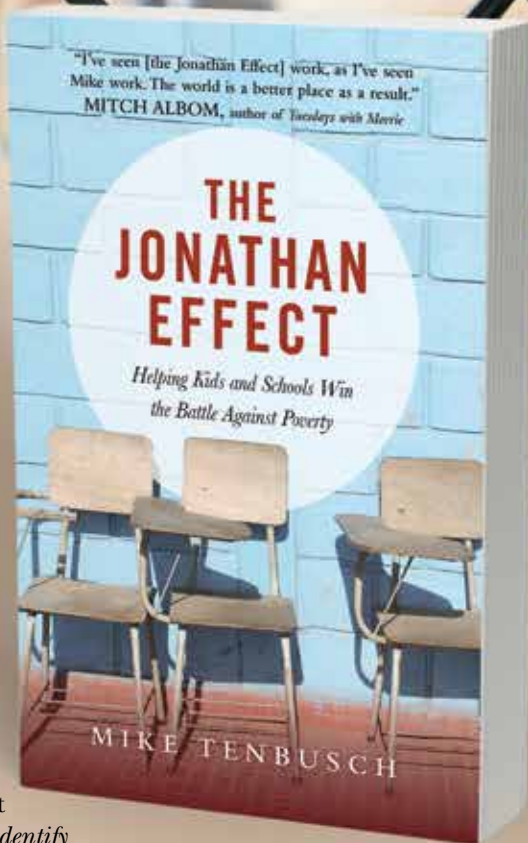
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DAN HEATH, coauthor of *Switch* and
Made to Stick

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BY JIM WALLIS

The Politics of 'Against'



"WE CAN'T LET our status as nonprofits turn us into non-prophets." My old friend Rev. Timothy McDonald III, senior pastor of First Iconium Baptist Church, said that at a town hall meeting on racism that we had in Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church last spring, on the anniversary of the murder of Martin Luther King Jr.

In McDonald's "prophetic" way, he was pointing to a real dilemma that many of us as church leaders are having with this election. Namely, how do we speak to the clear Christian issues involved in this election without violating our status as a nonprofit organization? (Under IRS regulations, so-called 501(c)(3) organizations such as ours are prohibited from participating in political campaigns.) How do we raise up a morally independent stance, as opposed to a politically partisan position?

Sojourners has always sought to change the conversation of election debates by lifting up the voices and



which featured leaders from many faith traditions, ethnicities, and theological backgrounds, focused on how to respond to the divisive and dangerous racial rhetoric in this presidential election campaign. We sought to discern how to remain *independent* of partisan political causes, faithful to the transcendent Christian values that are clearly at stake in this election, *respectful* of Christians who are led to different voting preferences in every election (which is a healthy thing), and *civil* in our own public discourse in an election environment that seems to have lost all civility.

I have seldom felt such a deep and painful spiritual wrestling and soul-searching among Christians as I did at these three gatherings.

GIVEN THE imperfections and flaws among political candidates in these and other elections, it is hard to see most people of faith coming together as "for" one or another of the choices. People of faith, like the country, are divided politically as to who and what will best serve the range of issues we care about. But I have come to believe that we can and should come together around things that we must be "against."

Racism strikes at the heart of the gospel, and racial reconciliation is at the core of the message of Jesus.

Therefore, I believe that Christians can and must be against racial bigotry. We can't ignore it, nor set it aside for other issues.

While issues of racism have often been implicit in our elections, they are now explicit, and racial bigotry, which is often expressed in the code language of "dog whistles," has this time been sounded like a bullhorn. People of color are particularly afraid, especially for the safety and well-being of their children.

Our integrity as disciples of Jesus Christ is at risk here. White evangelicals have to decide if they are more white or evangelical. As I've written, "If white Christians acted more Christian than white, black parents would have less to fear for their children." If a majority of white evangelicals end up being perceived as supporting racial bigotry in this election, it could be the obituary for the word "evangelical" in our lifetimes.

African-American, Latino, and Asian-American Christians are watching white Christians to see what they are going to do. And the rest of the world is watching as well.

As Christians, we cannot support division over unity, fear over hope, hate over love, and angry vitriol over respect. People will decide to vote for the best political outcomes they deem possible in imperfect elections, and they can decide to vote at some levels of the ballot and not at others.

But sometimes it is morally imperative that we stand up to say what we are against, and I believe this is one of those times. We should pray unceasingly, during this election season, for the soul and healing of the nation and the integrity of the churches. ■

Jim Wallis is editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine.

People of faith, like the country, are divided politically as to what will best serve the issues we care about.

interests of those outside of traditional political discourse: the most vulnerable, who are often of least interest to those looking for votes or campaign contributions. We have never endorsed a candidate for president but have always raised the moral issues of poverty, peace, justice, and the dignity of every life during election campaigns and asked Christians to vote according to those values.

I spent three days in early September with three different groups of faith leaders who were trying to bring their faith to bear in this election. These meetings,

Tiziana Fabi/AFP/Getty Images



Sharing the Sorrow

Imam Sami Salem and Imam Mohammed ben Mohammed stand during Mass in a Catholic church in Rome. Following the murder of French priest Jacques Hamel as he celebrated Mass—an attack for which the Islamic State claimed responsibility—Muslims across Europe attended Catholic services in solidarity. “I’m a practicing Muslim and I came to share my sorrow and tell you that we are brothers and sisters,” said one Muslim woman who attended a church in Paris.

By Shane Claiborne

Pulling the Plug on the Death Penalty

The Bible’s full of murderers. It’s also full of grace.

THE DEATH PENALTY is almost dead in America. It’s time to pull the final plug.

The number of death sentences imposed is the lowest it’s been in 40 years, and the number of executions is the lowest it’s been in 20. Every year another state abolishes the death penalty. Just this summer Delaware’s highest court declared its death penalty unconstitutional. Several more states are poised to do the same. In fact, only a handful of states are actually still executing. This year Texas and Georgia accounted for 80 percent of the executions.

Most Americans have moved on from the death penalty. When presented with alternatives, a majority of the population says they are against it.

The question is not *if* we will abolish the death penalty, but *when*. With the vacancy on the Supreme Court, we are at a critical tipping point. We will someday look back at the death penalty like we look back at slavery, asking, “How did we think that was okay?”

But where will Christians be as this history is made? It’s troubling that the death penalty has succeeded in the U.S. because of Christians, not in spite of us. Eight out of every 10 executions in the past four decades have been in the Bible belt. Where Christians are most concentrated is where capital pun-

“I wasn’t a Christian before all that, but you better believe I am now.”

ishment has flourished. Strange, isn’t it? One would think that those of us who worship a victim of state-sanctioned execution would be suspicious of state violence, that we’d be its biggest critics. But that’s not always the case.

But here’s the deal: I’m hopeful. Only 5 percent of Americans think Jesus would support the death penalty. Christians born after 1980 are overwhelmingly opposed to it. The National Association of Evangelicals

has pulled back on its support and the National Latino Evangelical Coalition has called for total abolition. A growing movement of faith-fueled conservatives is leading the way to alternatives to the death penalty in states such as Nebraska, where a referendum to retain a death-penalty ban is on the

upcoming ballot. The Movement for Black Lives lists ending capital punishment as one of its top needed reforms. And, as part of the year of mercy, Pope Francis issued a clarion call for a global moratorium.

We’ve got some great saints in the abolition movement, and we need more. So what can we actually do?

Contact everyone we know in Nebraska, California, and Oklahoma, where the death penalty will be on the ballot. Encourage

Our Mission

The mission of *Sojourners* magazine is to inspire hope and action by articulating the biblical call to racial and social justice, life and peace, and environmental stewardship.

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them to vote to end it.

Use the facts. There is a lot of misinformation about the death penalty as supposedly cost-efficient, a deterrent to crime, or an effective way to bring closure to victims. The more people learn about the death penalty, the more troubled they become by it.

Make subversive friendships. If you lean liberal, build friendships with the growing movement of conservatives concerned about the death penalty, and vice versa.

Amplify the voices of murder victims' family members who are against the death penalty. They have so much credibility, and it debunks the idea that to be anti-execution means you are anti-victim.

Get in the way. There are all sorts of monkey wrenches in the gears of death. In North Carolina, the medical community refused to comply, insisting that it is a violation of doctors' code of ethics.

Finally, tell stories. Stories put a face

on the issue. I got a letter from a man in Florida who told me his story. He committed a terrible crime and took someone's life. But the victim's family was Christian. During sentencing the family insisted that no one was beyond redemption. This man's life was spared. He told me, "I wasn't a Christian before all that, but you better believe I am now."

If we believe murderers are beyond redemption, then we can rip out half the Bible—because it was written by them (think about Moses, David, and Saul). The Bible would be much shorter without grace. Let's honor that amazing grace by ending the death penalty in America. Let's do it in the name of the executed and risen Savior who came to save us from death. ■

Shane Claiborne, a Sojourners contributing editor, is author of Executing Grace: How the Death Penalty Killed Jesus and Why It's Killing Us.

By Kathy Khang

Opting Out of the Black-White Binary

A Korean American on filling in the gaps of our collective history.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS movement. #BlackLivesMatter. Racial reconciliation. It would be easy for me to imagine the words of Eliza in the musical "Hamilton" and sing, "I'm erasing myself from the narrative."

At first glance, those statements, movements, and conversations might be mistakenly boiled down to division and brokenness between two Americas—one black, one white.

But I'm neither. I'm "yellow."

I didn't choose to erase myself in history, but it's what I learned. Asian Americans weren't erased from American history as much as we just didn't exist in the Plymouth Rock story of East Coast immigration, with its emphasis on Europe's poor and hungry "huddled masses." We learned that "assimilation" was as much about becoming "white" as it was about becoming "American." We learned that the civil rights movement was a fight for equal rights for black Americans, with little connection to "others" like myself. There was no category for someone who looked like me unless it was Oriental, chink,

or gook—racial slurs I first heard as a child on suburban playgrounds (and still hear as an adult), slurs tied to a history and wars I knew very little about. In America, race is a social construct divided most simply between black and white.

I also learned that the best I could hope for was to become a model minority, an "honorary white" who would never be considered a "real" American.

So I just didn't become one. In an act of rebellion, I chose not to become a naturalized U.S. citizen until a few years ago. In the process I learned what it means to opt into a binary conversation with a different, clear, defined perspective. I needed to learn who I was, created as a Korean-American woman carrying God's image. I needed to learn that Jesus, Mary, Martha, and Esther weren't blue-eyed or blonde.

I also needed to learn about Angel Island in California (the Ellis Island of the West) and to read more than a few paragraphs on the internment of Japanese Americans. I needed to discover Yuri Kochiyama and

From the Archives

November 1984

Double Jeopardy

WOMEN IN almost every culture and segment of society experience violence ... that is directed specifically at them as women. In the United States, women of color—Latina, African American, Asian, and Native American—experience violence that is specifically focused against them because of both their race and their gender. When misogynist violence combines with racism, the result is a unique and deadly threat to women of oppressed races. ...

Women of different races and economic backgrounds have begun to join together in a movement to end the violence that endangers them all. The women of color who are involved in this movement, however, bear witness to the barriers that hinder such cooperation. Prominent among them is the misunderstanding or ignorance of the particular ways that both individuals and institutions perpetrate violence focused against women of color. It is clear from the historical and current experiences of women of color that racism is an inextricable factor in this violence. They reject, therefore, analyses that blame only sexism and patriarchal structures for violence against women. The problem of misogynist violence can only be fully addressed when the experiences of all women are incorporated into the perspective of the movement for change. Both racist and anti-women stereotypes and attitudes must be overcome before society can become a safe place for all women. ■

Liane Rozzell was a Sojourners editorial assistant when this article appeared.



other non-black and non-white Americans who fought for civil rights. I needed to learn that as a Korean-American woman, I actually was connected to the civil rights movement, that I have benefitted from it.

I could not enter into the black and white conversation until I knew I wasn't (and didn't want to be) white and didn't need to play

Matter movement, immigration reform, or politics more broadly. The present day can look very binary. But, because of my friendships and relationships in the binary and beyond, I cannot be silent.

Instead, I invite my fellow Asian Americans to learn about our place in America's past so it can inform our present.

Immigrants learn that "assimilation" is as much about becoming "white" as it is about becoming "American."

oppression Olympics with black Americans. I needed to reject becoming an honorary white or an honorary black person (and I write that with caution, understanding that to be black in America is a dangerous personhood). I needed to reject the American dream as much as I needed to reject any desire to be seen as "woke."

I don't blame Asian Americans who are reluctant to get involved the Black Lives

I learn from my black, white, Native, and Latino friends in order to fill in the gaps of our collective history. Gaps in the black-white binary narrative limit our collective understanding. How can we build a better world if we don't know all the stories we can include? ■

Kathy Khang, co-author of More Than Serving Tea, is a writer, speaker, and coffee-drinker in the north suburbs of Chicago.

By Jim Rice

Welcome to Post-Sexist America

The election of our first black president shone a light on racism. Is it misogyny's time next?

SEXISM IS DEAD. So sayeth most men, according to a national survey in August. Women, on the other hand, aren't quite convinced.

The poll by the Pew Research Center found that 56 percent of men, and only 34 percent of women, said they thought that "sexism no longer was a barrier" to women in this country. (A pair of adjacent headlines on washingtonpost.com summed it up: "Sexism is over, according to most men" immediately preceded "It's 2016, and women still make less for doing the same work as men.")

So, welcome to "post-sexist" America.

I imagine it will look a lot like the "post-racist" America that Barack Obama's election in 2008 supposedly ushered in. At that time, a few days after Obama's historic election, *The Wall Street Journal* wrote that "Barack Obama's election as the first black U.S. president promises to usher in a new era of race relations."

The paper quoted a senior Obama adviser as saying, "People say he is a post-racial

candidate. When people say that, they seem to suggest that we are beyond the issue of race, that issues of race don't matter." But Obama will tell you, she continued, that "he thinks race does matter."

Turns out the president was right.

AND NOW, if the country elects its first woman president this fall, will it be seen as a sign that the country has moved into a new era regarding justice and equality for women?

The campaign itself, of course, hasn't been encouraging. Some wonder if the level of vitriol aimed at the first woman to receive a major-party presidential nomination is due in large part to the fact that she's, well, a woman.

Over the last 50 or 60 years, overt sexism—like overt racism—has been made less and less socially acceptable. But a look at basic statistics for, say, women in leadership positions—from CEOs at top companies (4 percent) to members of Congress (19 to 20 percent)—should dispel the delusion that we

live in an egalitarian society.

And the public rhetoric of the past year has had the effect of mainstreaming misogyny, just as it has mainstreamed anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim and anti-Latino sentiment.

Such rhetoric is problematic in itself—hateful words matter. It creates an environment where woman-hating (and racially charged antipathy toward Muslims, Latinos, et al) is seen in some circles as acceptable. But it doesn't stop with words: Such an environment spawns increases in violence against women and other hate crimes. As William Brennan, author of *Dehumanizing the Vulnerable: When Word Games Take Lives*, put it, "the victimization

In the U.S., 56 percent of men and 34 percent of women say sexism is no longer a barrier.

of women has been and continues to be facilitated by dehumanizing terminology."

And all of that will likely explode in magnitude when and if a woman becomes the nation's commander-in-chief. We shouldn't be surprised when the focus is on her hairstyle or clothes instead of her policies, or (God forbid) when the common Twitterverse attacks on her as a "bitch" or as "dangerously menopausal" slither into mainstream political discourse. And it's not just men getting in on the act; women also buy into internalized sexism. The head of a Texas company said last year that women were disqualified from being president because "We're built differently, we have different hormones." She added that being president "should be left to a man, a good, strong, honorable man."

It's clear that shattering the presidential glass ceiling will no more signal the end of sexism than Obama's victory marked the end of racism. And if history is any guide, it will get worse before it gets better.

But sometimes, no matter how disturbing, it's necessary to expose a wound in order for it to heal. ■

Jim Rice is editor of Sojourners.

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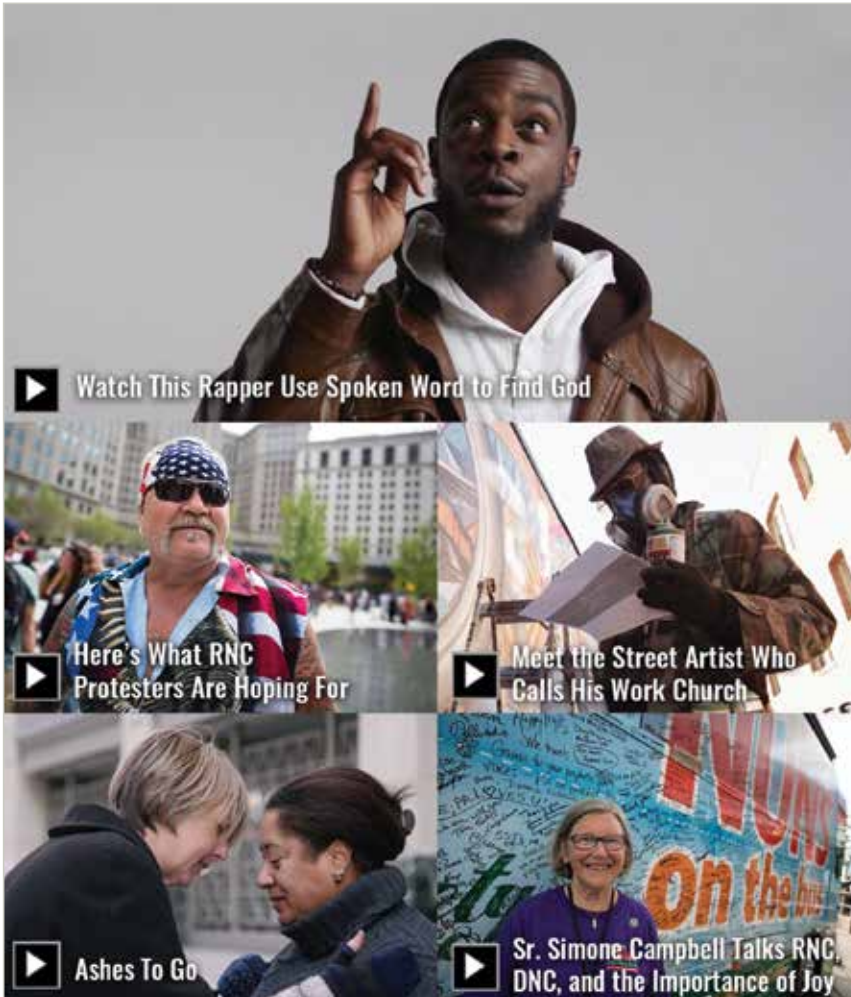
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QUOTED

“We forget that technology is only as good or bad as the people using it.”

—Rishika Pardikar
on using virtual reality to build
empathy for Syrian refugees
sojo.net/virtualreality

EXCERPT

Follow Your Questions

We often feel that something is wrong before we have the words to describe it. That was definitely my case. I learned about Aristotle's virtue ethics, Augustine's political theology, Kant's categorical imperative, Heidegger's Dasein, Kuyper's Calvinism, Wittgenstein's language-games, Simone de Beauvoir's feminism. It's not that this was all bad or unhelpful, but it only told a partial story.

For example, I once noticed what Hegel said about black people in the assigned reading for a class. It disturbed me. It seemed to me like an important problem if we wanted to understand this thing called "modernity." But we didn't discuss it. What Hegel (and Kant, and others) said about various peoples of the world was construed as secondary. I glimpsed the limitations of how Western thought thought about itself.

To be fair, there were always some professors who were aware of these limitations. I was fortunate to find teachers who made room for other voices and questions. And that's the best you can do sometimes. Don't necessarily expect your allies to look like you or look some particular way. Find the teachers who respect you and allow you to follow your questions.

Frantz Fanon has a famous prayer at the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*: "My final prayer: 'O my body, make of me always a man who questions!'" If people want to reject the prayers that arise from your body and your experiences in this world, then find other people to pray with.

—Daniel José Camacho

in "Open Letter to the College Senior
Detecting Colonial Prejudice"

sojo.net/collegeseniior

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Hundreds have joined the Standing Rock Sioux in protecting their land and preventing the Dakota Access pipeline.

What Would Sitting Bull Do?

AS SUMMER drew to a close, one of the great dramas in the planet's ongoing environmental uprising erupted in a remote place, the Standing Rock Sioux reservation that straddles the border of North and South Dakota. The Army Corps of Engineers had approved plans for "fast-tracking" the Dakota Access pipeline, which would carry crude from the Bakken shale of North Dakota west to Illinois and then south to Gulf refineries. The pipeline was mostly on private land,

injustice that haunts this nation.

Except that this time something unexpected happened. The local Sioux said no: They erected an encampment blocking access to the construction work. And their message spread: White environmentalists joined them, as well as a crew from Black Lives Matter, but mostly other native Americans poured in, from all across the West—representatives of as many as 200 different tribal nations, according to reports. Chief Harry Goodwolf Kindness of the American Indian Movement commented that it has been well over a century since people from so many tribes had engaged in such joint action. "First time since the Battle of Greasy Grass," he said, "so it's been a long time."

The 1876 Battle of Greasy Grass is better known to most Americans as the Battle of Little Big Horn—and invoking it here is a reminder of just how much native communities have suffered at the hands of the U.S. Army, whose Corps of Engineers is engineering this pipeline. Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge—Standing Rock may someday join that list, though hopefully as a peaceful triumph, not a bloody loss. A place where the tide began to turn.

I'm particularly glad that Indigenous people are in the spotlight here, because

they've been at the forefront—all over the world—of the fight for a sane environmental future. Without their leadership the battle over the Keystone pipeline would never have been joined, much less won. In Australia, aboriginal leaders were crucial in stopping plans for the world's biggest coal mine. In the Pacific, it's native islanders who are leading the reaction to coral reef bleaching.

These may be among the sanest people on a planet where sanity is rarely the rule. As the rest of the world pushes us over a climatic cliff, native people—the only people who've managed long-term successful inhabitation of this continent, anyway—are doing their best to remind us of some basic truths. As the great warrior Winona LaDuke wrote from the reservation:

The Standing Rock protest camp represents that struggle for freedom and the future of a people. All of us. If I ask the question, "What would Sitting Bull do?"—the answer is pretty clear. He would remind me what he said 150 years ago: "Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children." ■

Bill McKibben, a Sojourners contributing editor, is the Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College in Vermont and founder of 350.org.

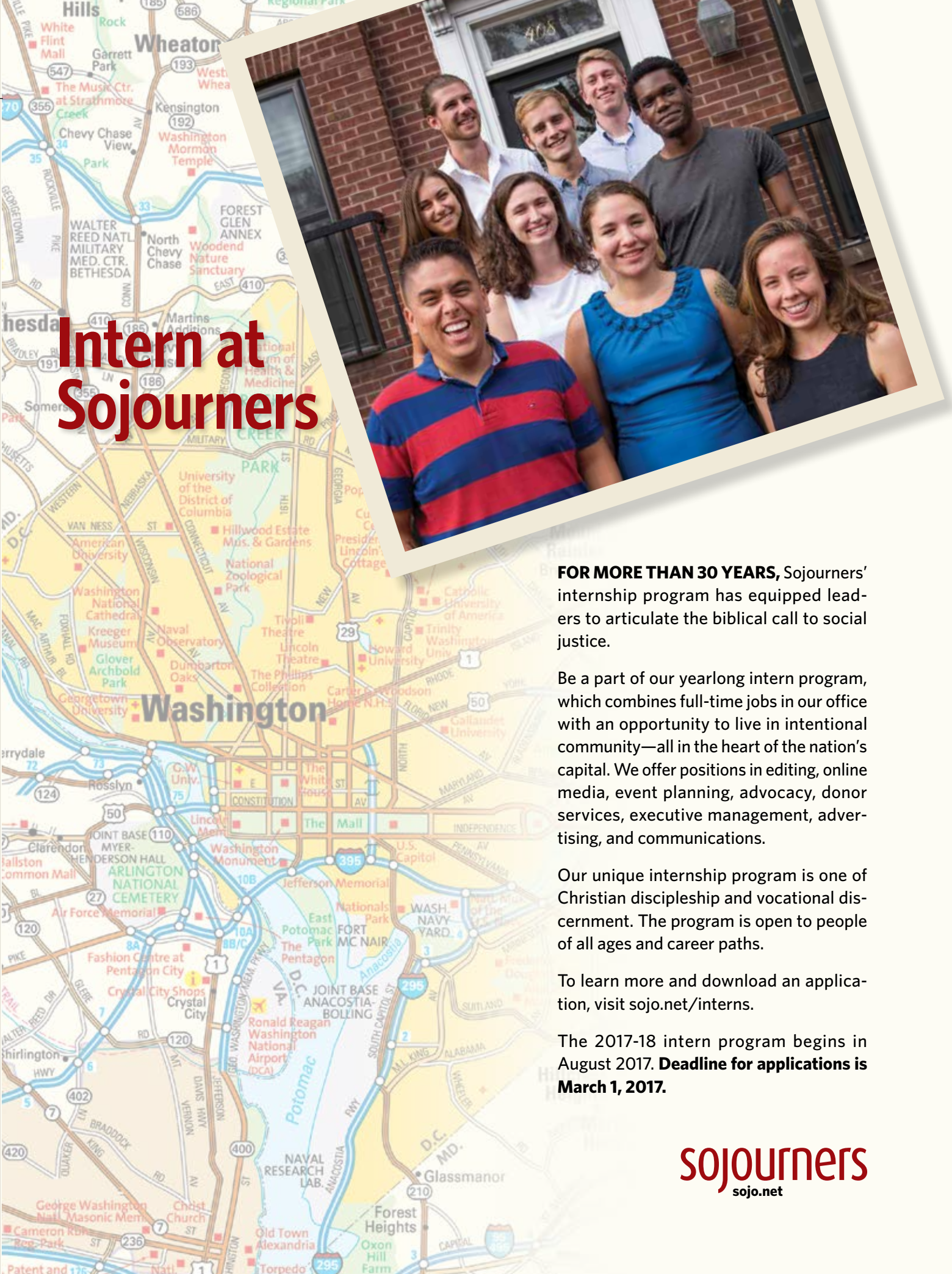


Indigenous people have been at the forefront—all over the world—of the fight for a sane environmental future.

and the company had gotten most of the necessary approvals from pliant state officials—but it had to cross the Missouri River somewhere.

The original plans had called for that crossing to happen just above Bismarck, a mostly white North Dakota city. But there had been concern about what would happen to the town's water supply in the event of a leak, so the map had been redrawn, to take the pipe across the river just above the Sioux reservation. And the Army Corps had signed off on the plan—even though three other federal agencies, including the EPA, had raised serious objections. Just another day in the ongoing saga of environmental

Urban Native Era/Twitter



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How to Preserve **WHITE SUPREMACY**

Jim Crow's five-point plan for the 21st century.

by **JIM WALLIS** • illustration by **DAN HUBIG**

EARLIER THIS YEAR I heard Rev. William Barber of the Moral Mondays movement in North Carolina use the phrase “Mr. James Crow, Esq.”

Since hearing the phrase, I have been reflecting on the revised and updated name for Jim Crow, the comprehensive and brutal system of racial segregation, discrimination, and terrorist violence against black lives and bodies—explicit in the U.S. South, and often implicit in the North, throughout the 20th century.

I have been thinking about this new and more-sophisticated Mr. James Crow, wearing a white shirt and a tie instead of a white sheet and a hood and inhabiting the back rooms in state legislatures and corporate offices instead of rural backwoods lynching sites.

I've also been thinking about Mr. Crow's strategy for the 2016 election and the years ahead.

Mr. James Crow's biggest concern now is the transformational demographic shifts occurring in the United States, which by 2040 or so will see a significant milestone: For the first time, the U.S. will no longer be a white-majority nation and, instead, will be made up of a majority of minorities. That's one of the most important facts in American political life today. This fundamental demographic shift in racial and cultural identity is underneath almost everything in U.S. politics—including the presidential election.

So with a suit instead of a sheet, how does Mr. James Crow, Esq., enact his strategy? And what are the servants of Mr. Crow saying to one another?

THIS NEW VERSION of Jim Crow has a clear, systematic strategy to protect white supremacy and promote racial segregation, discrimination, and even violence. He knows that even he, with all his power, can't prevent the racial

demographics of America from evolving. But he thinks he can obstruct and delay the changes that new racial demographics will bring to American life and politics. In apartheid South Africa, we saw that even when a racial group is in the minority, it can wield the power to oppress other races and protect its own supremacy.

Mr. James Crow's five-part strategy includes:

1 Racial gerrymandering. Gerrymandering—the redrawing of congressional districts to benefit a party in power—is not new in U.S. politics, and it has been done by both sides. But to draw district boundaries along racial lines deliberately to diminish the voting power of racial minorities has been a Republican approach for a long time, part of the party's “Southern Strategy” that emerged in the second half of the 20th century out of recognition that the GOP doesn't get many minority votes.

Republicans have gained more than 900 state legislative seats since Obama became president and now control 30 state legislatures, compared to 11 with a Democratic majority. In the 2012 midterm elections—the first held after the 2010 census—Democrats received nearly 1.4 million more votes nationwide for the House of Representatives, yet Republicans retained control of the House by a 33-seat margin. That trend was even more pronounced in swing states in the 2014 midterms: In Pennsylvania, for instance, Democratic candidates received 44 percent of the vote, but won only five of the

Mr. James Crow, Esq., enacts his strategy wearing a suit and tie instead of a sheet and a hood.

Since Richard Nixon's Southern Strategy, candidates have

commonwealth's 18 House seats.

What's most troubling about these recent examples of partisan gerrymandering, however, is the way they have diminished (some would say intentionally) the voices of voters of color. North Carolina provides some of the more egregious examples. Republicans there make up just 30 percent of registered voters, and yet the party holds 10 of the state's 13 House seats. Earlier this year, a federal district court ruled that two North Carolina districts had been unconstitutionally gerrymandered using a blatant "racial quota" to pack African-American voters together so their political power would be diluted, according to *The New York Times*.

Such race-based redistricting has helped create a much more intensely partisan House and helped white politicians retain the levers of congressional power despite shifting national demographics.

2 Fighting immigration reform. In 2015, polls showed majority support for comprehensive immigration reform to fix what was broadly seen as a broken immigration system and to invite 11 million undocumented immigrants onto an earned "path to citizenship." Support for immigration reform was found among Democrats, independents, and Republicans, and even among white evangelicals and Catholics.

Republican leaders in the House at that time promised a delegation of religious leaders—three Catholic bishops and three evangelicals—that they would bring comprehensive immigration reform up for a floor vote, since it had already passed the Senate with bipartisan support. They broke that promise to us when Speaker of the House John Boehner caved in to a small number of Republican members who decided to block the legislation. All indications were that an up-or-down vote on immigration reform would have passed the House at that time, but a floor vote was never allowed. Instead, Boehner let a small group of lawmakers from nearly all-white districts veto the will of the American people.

Since then Republican candidates at all levels, from local races to the presidential campaign, have sought to reverse the consensus in support of comprehensive immigration reform. Some have called for the deportation of 11 million undocumented immigrants, which would break up millions of families, many of whom have lived in the U.S. for decades. Others have proposed to move the goal posts by offering expanded guest-worker programs and the "legalization" of some undocumented immigrants, but with no path to citizenship.

This would, of course, take away the possibility that millions of new citizens—and, eventually, their children—could someday vote. Another way to forestall the enfranchisement of new voters of color.

3 Mass incarceration. The mass incarceration of black and brown people, in radically disproportionate numbers, has led to massive voter disenfranchisement for those same people when they return from prison, as Michelle Alexander has documented in her groundbreaking book *The New Jim Crow*. As Bryan Stevenson, author of the 2014 book *Just Mercy*, puts it, slavery never ended, it has just evolved.

"There are more African-American adults under correctional control today—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began," Alexander noted in a Feb. 2011 *Sojourners* article. Despite the fact that white people and people of color use illegal drugs at very similar rates, people of color are arrested, charged, and imprisoned for nonviolent drug offenses at shockingly disproportionate rates. Alexander noted, "Although the majority of illegal drug users and dealers are white, three-fourths of all people imprisoned for drug offenses have been black and Latino."

When these nonviolent offenders are released from prison with felonies on their records, they find themselves deprived of many of the rights that most American citizens take for granted. As I wrote in *America's Original Sin*, "The tragic irony here is that many of the rights they forfeit are precisely those that people of color fought for during the civil rights movement," including, crucially, the right to vote.

4 Voter restrictions. Since 2010, 21 states—including some key battlegrounds in the presidential election—have instituted new voting restrictions. In our April issue, Myrna Perez of the Brennan Center for Justice called this "the biggest rollback of the right to vote since the Jim Crow era." The 2013 Supreme Court ruling (in *Shelby v. Holder*) made voter suppression even easier for states by gutting a key provision of the Voting Rights Act.

These restrictions, usually done under the guise of preventing alleged voter fraud, are in fact aimed at making it more difficult for poor people and minorities to vote. (Numerous investigations and studies have shown that voter fraud is largely a myth—the real "fraud" is that many eligible voters have been prevented from practicing their right to vote.) Methods to suppress voting rights include everything from cutbacks on early voting and restrictions on registration to requiring specific forms of photo ID.

This summer a federal appeals court struck down a North Carolina voter ID law, provisions of which, the court ruled, "target African Americans with almost surgical precision." The court added, "With race data in hand, the legislature amended the bill to exclude many of the alternative photo IDs used by African Americans" and "retained only the kinds of IDs that white North

appealed to white racial resentment to win votes.

Carolínians were more likely to possess.”

Deliberately suppressing voting rights is the most effective technique for those seeking to obstruct the changes brought about by the new demographics in this country. That is a fundamental moral issue, not just a political one.

5 A resurgence of white nationalism. The fifth strategy is to “mainstream” white nationalism and support a “strongman” approach to politics. Such an approach emphasizes large-scale deportation, mass incarceration, “voting reforms,” and other policies ostensibly aimed at promoting “law and order” but which actually are efforts to delay or roll back the demographic changes occurring in America. At the very least, this approach implicitly and explicitly promises that white people will retain the levers of power no matter how the demographics of the country shift.

It should be said that Republican candidates and office holders going back to Richard Nixon’s Southern Strategy have appealed to white racial resentment to win votes, often by using coded language. But this year we are seeing an unprecedented amount of open appeals to bigotry, xenophobia, and racism. Such rhetoric is further eroding civility in our public discourse, as are those who embrace being “politically incorrect”—which really just means saying things that are hurtful or bigoted toward entire groups of people, which tends to embolden others to openly express their racially tinged animus.

There are serious and legitimate reasons for many white, blue-collar people to feel anger and despair at their stagnant economic fortunes. But using the understandable anger of economically marginalized people whose lives and families are falling apart to hatefully blame “others” who are not the ones responsible for their problems—in order to build political power—is one of the most dangerous patterns in U.S. and world politics.

H OW CAN WE DEFEAT Mr. James Crow, Esq., and his insidious agenda? It is a monumental task, but there are some clear signs of hope. Christian leaders from many denominations came together this spring to issue a theological statement, “Called to Resist Bigotry,” which urges Christians to reject and resist bigoted rhetoric and tactics used in service of political campaigns. As we said in the statement, “by confronting a message so contrary to our Christian values, our religious voices can help provide a powerful way to put our true faith and our better American values forward in the midst of national moral confusion and crisis.”

Mr. James Crow’s first four tactics have even more clear solutions.

1. Racial gerrymandering—by either party—must be rejected. People of faith and conscience should advocate consistently and clearly for redistricting reform in their respective states, especially ahead of the 2020 census, which will trigger the next round of congressional redistricting.

2. The champions of comprehensive immigration reform need to keep the pressure on their elected representatives for a path to citizenship and reject calls to “legalize” undocumented immigrants with no hope of future citizenship, particularly in the immediate wake of the November elections.

3. The racially disproportionate incarceration of our citizens needs to stop. We must remove mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent drug offenses and deal with illegal drugs more through education and treatment than via policing and incarceration. And every state should restore the voting rights of returning prisoners who have “paid their debt to society,” as has been done in Virginia by Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

4. Perhaps most important, we must protect the right to vote of “Matthew 25 people.” In the 25th chapter of Matthew, Jesus calls us to protect the “least of these”—the hungry, thirsty, and naked, strangers and those sick and in prison. Because the new voter restrictions are aimed at these very people, I call this effort “the Matthew 25 voter-suppression campaign.”

As activists work at the state and federal level to challenge unjust voter suppression laws, volunteers will be needed all across the country to ensure that vulnerable voters know their rights, have a way to get to the polls, and have the opportunity to express their constitutional right to vote. A number of organizations have created an election-protection hotline, 866-OUR-VOTE, which anyone can call to learn about their rights and report problems they encounter at the polls.

On Election Day, I would love to see clergy in their collars, along with others from their congregations, in polling places all over the country, acting to protect the rights of our most vulnerable voters. Sojourners is working with other nonpartisan groups, in partnership with lawyers and others, in training people of faith to take these very appropriate—and necessary—steps to protect these Matthew 25 voters.

Together, we can vanquish Mr. James Crow, Esq., and truly welcome the new nation we are becoming. It won’t happen overnight, and it will take people of all races working together on multiple fronts, but I believe it will be done. ■

Jim Wallis is editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine.

We must protect the right to vote of “Matthew 25 people.”

The Abortion IMPASSE

The extremes have dominated the debate about abortion. Absent a social revolution, reducing demand is the only meaningful path forward.

by DAVID GUSHEE

THERE IS NO legislative solution to the problem of abortion. There is no president who can end abortion. There is no Supreme Court justice who will solve abortion.

This is not just because we Americans, including we American Christians, have been shouting at each other about abortion for more than 40 years, with no end in sight. It is not just because the conflicting beliefs that people have about abortion are unlikely to change. It is not just because our polarized interest groups and political parties now gain support off of abortion. It is not just because the two “sides” on abortion are roughly balanced and appear likely to remain so.

Abortion is the sad song that never ends. It never ends because at one level it is an intractable human problem, visible in all times and cultures. It goes like this: Fertile heterosexual males and females are needy, passionate, sexual creatures who are drawn to each other and often end up having sex. They do so for all kinds of reasons, some good, some just okay, some terrible. When a fertile male and fertile female are “shooting with live bullets,” sometimes the woman will get pregnant. This is true sometimes when they are using birth control and certainly when they are not using birth control. The God-given power of mammalian reproduction is not easily denied.

Gerald Herbert/Associated Press



Pro-life demonstrators block the signs of pro-choice counter-demonstrators in front of the U.S. Supreme Court during the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.

Americans, including Christians, have been shouting at each



other about abortion for more than 40 years.

The God-given power of mammalian reproduction is not easily denied.

Almost every known society has attempted to create systems of social control to limit sexual contact between fertile men and women, in large part because of the procreative power of the mature human body. These have been remarkably comprehensive social systems. They have involved religious, political, legal, moral, communal, and familial efforts to train attitudes, impose constraints, inflame fears, and so on. Always they have involved efforts to limit private contact between sexually mature men and women outside of the socially approved context for procreation—usually, marriage.

Christian traditions have done this in their own way, and many readers are of course intimately familiar with the strategies that have been attempted. The highest sources of religious authority (Bible, church) have been cited to ban sex between unmarried men and women. For centuries, and often still today, shaming efforts, especially of women who violate the ban, have been intense and harmful. The moral goodness of sex has been rejected altogether or, in recent decades, rejected until the wedding night. Churches have sought to support families in holding back the awesome power of sex for as long as possible, always with varying rates of success. Young couples have been pressed to marry as early and as quickly as possible. Babies born “out of wedlock” for centuries were labeled with ugly epithets to complete the shaming of “fallen women.”

A perfect storm for unwanted pregnancies

None of those efforts ever proved completely successful in holding back the tide. But since the 1960s they have collapsed. Perhaps a nation as congenitally committed to personal freedom as America would always have been hard soil for efforts to keep the unmarried apart.

But all kinds of factors have conspired at least since World War II to create a society whose conditions constitute a perfect storm for abortion. Mass access to automobiles; coeducational schools; women’s empowerment to pursue professional ambitions; lack of parental oversight of dating relationships; liberalizing attitudes toward the morality of non-marital sex, with all kinds of media encouraging further liberalization; the development, legalization, and mass distribution of contraception (combined with uneven use of it across the population); gradual delaying of the age of marriage due to the shift to a knowledge-based economy—these are among the features of our perfect storm.

The historic 1973 decision of the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* to legalize abortion was both result and

cause of what has become a culture deeply dependent on abortion. (*Doe v. Bolton*, decided the same day, also matters. That decision rendered even the late-term ban on abortion hopelessly weak.) The scheme to break the moral status of the fetus down along a trimester model was flimsy at the time and has collapsed since, and the legal rationale in a “right to privacy” never was all that persuasive.

What the justices really should have said was something like this: “Given the powerful demand for abortion in our society, which has emerged based on an unforeseen convergence of social factors, any ban or serious limitation on women’s access to abortion would be as unenforceable as Prohibition—and would be especially oppressive for women facing pregnancies that in their circumstances are personally disastrous. Regardless of one’s personal religious or moral beliefs about abortion, an unenforceable law is a bad law, so we hereby grant access to abortion with the following limits ...” If these limits had followed European models, they could have included a ban on (non-emergency) abortions after a certain number of weeks, perhaps 16.

As it was, the court opened a societal wound that has never healed, despite several later efforts by the court to reconsider the issue (such as the 1992 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* case). Both pro-life and pro-choice activists have become more absolutist in the intervening years. State laws before 1973 had reflected and integrated a variety of human(e) considerations, including the circumstances of the pregnancy, the health of the fetus, and the stage of the pregnancy. Thoughtful Christians and others actually were able to discuss the pros and cons of various approaches to abortion law—three/two/one/no exceptions, timing, etc. And positions on abortion were not locked into a partisan or liberal/conservative binary.

But increasingly in the decades after 1973, it became all or nothing—no limits on abortion ever, for any reason, no slowdowns, no speed bumps, no moral pressure to consider options vs. no access to abortion ever, for any reason, in any circumstance.

So the extremes prevailed, reinforcing each other, often with competing horror stories. Here’s the 24-week-old fetus that barely survived a late-term abortion and now lives. There’s the fragile 11-year-old rape victim who may die carrying her legally enforced pregnancy to term. The idea that we might be able to create a legal framework in which we can agree that both of those rare situations must never happen has proved to be beyond us. And meanwhile, the everyday, “garden variety”

Thoughtful Christians and others actually were able to discuss



Protesters clash in front of the Supreme Court building.

abortions go on and on and on, because the social circumstances that create them remain unchanged, if not worsened.

A meaningful path forward

What is an anxious Christian to do about all this? Understanding the universal human and then particularly American cultural factors that lie behind the demand for abortion should certainly help.

Absent a social revolution, the effort to reduce abortion on the demand side is the only meaningful path forward. This involves creating subcultures of resistance to a culture dependent on abortion. This is the one thing the churches can really do that is meaningful. Teaching sexual restraint without shame. Teaching best practices for birth control when sexual restraint has reached its limit. Creating family and church communities that can support couples who face unwanted pregnancies and are seeking alternatives to abortion.

There are times when policies really are pretty extreme and need to be addressed. Having actually held dead 18-week fetuses in my hands on two particularly sad days of my life, I think it is indeed a travesty that abortion is permitted in non-emergency circumstances as late as that. But I would also very strongly oppose any

hard-right turn that would start banning abortion for pre-teens who have been raped or are victims of incest.

Probably the basic structure of abortion law in the U.S. will change little, though there is the outside chance that the matter will be sent back to the states, which would then reimpose the patchwork quilt of laws like those that existed prior to 1973. This would reconfigure the circumstances that women would face who desire to end their pregnancies, and in many cases increase their hardship.

But this outcome, which many in the pro-life movement would consider a huge achievement, would do nothing to change the convergent social forces that have gotten us where we are. So I do not think it should be our focus. Instead, we must address the prevention side, the demand side—and we must take the side of young women who need deep personal and systemic help to avoid having to face that miserable drive to the abortion clinic. ■

David P. Gushee, Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics at Mercer University and a Sojourners contributing editor, is author of A Letter to My Anxious Christian Friends (Sept. 2016, Westminster John Knox), from which this is adapted with permission.

the pros and cons of various approaches to abortion law.

Shop 'til They Drop

Ever wonder why things in the local mall are so cheap? Prison labor may be part of the answer.

by **LISA SHARON HARPER**

TWO WEEKS BEFORE Christmas last year, I stood with 50 other national faith leaders on the banks of the Alabama River in Montgomery, Ala., trying to imagine what it must have been like to stand on that land in 1850, at the height of the black chattel slave trade.

We were embarking on a one-day pilgrimage convened by Sojourners and hosted by the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). We were there to understand one thing: the nature of the confinement and control of black bodies in the U.S. from chattel slavery through Jim Crow to mass incarceration.

Library of Congress



Background: Women prisoners work for Alabama Correctional Industries, a manufacturer of institutional products, including clothing, office furniture, and cleaning supplies. At left, an inmate sews a flag for Maryland Correctional Enterprises. Inset: Prisoners chop wood in South Carolina, circa 1934.

One of the greatest myths of American history is

Congress banned the import of enslaved people in 1808, but it did not ban the slave industry. Slave traders turned inward. Men, women, and children of African descent were sold in the Upper South; chained together with shackles around their feet, wrists, waists, and necks; and marched—often without shoes—over hundreds of miles into the Deep South for sale to farm owners desperate to meet the explosive global demand for cotton after the invention of the cotton gin.

“But walking was too slow and expensive to meet the high demand,” said Bryan Stevenson, founding executive director of EJI, to the faith leaders standing at the mouth of Montgomery’s Commerce Street. Stevenson explained that sales multiplied as transport methods improved.

By the 1840s, the Commerce Street port housed a steamboat dock and a train station. Rather than marching 20 people over hundreds of miles, traders could transport hundreds of enslaved people at a time—quicker and less expensive. Slavery was industry. Even in these early iterations, maximizing profit and lowering the bottom line were of chief concern.

According to a 2013 EJI report, “Slavery in America: The Montgomery Slave Trade,” Montgomery’s Commerce Street became one of the most easily accessible points of trade in Alabama by 1860. Slave traders would unload humans from ships and trains at the top of Commerce Street and auction them three blocks away at Court Square. Auctioneers coaxed farm owners to push bids higher until the auctioneer cried “Sold!” Mothers were separated from sons and daughters. Sisters were separated from brothers. And husbands were separated from wives. Humans were forced to fill days with bone-breaking labor, heartache,

and absolute acquiescence to the domination of overseers and masters—until death freed them from the clutch of American commerce.

By 1850, more than half of the 2.5 million enslaved people in the U.S. labored on cotton farms. By 1860, the enslaved population increased to 4 million. By the start of the Civil War in 1861, the entire U.S. had become a slave-based economy. The goods from the South supported the way of life in the North.

The ‘black codes’

One of the greatest myths in America is that the Civil War ended slavery. It did not. It transformed it.

The 13th Amendment abolished slavery “except as a punishment for crime.” In the years following the Civil War, Southern and Midwestern states struggled to recover from the economic impacts of war and the sudden loss of 4 million unpaid laborers. These states leveraged the constitutional exception to revive flailing economies. They turned to the only thing they knew for the previous 250 years—free labor. They slipped through the constitutional exception to reinvent the centuries-old American practice of lowering bottom lines through forced free labor. Slavery in the Jim Crow era became known as “peonage” and “convict leasing.”

Peonage laws (aka “black codes”) sprung up in states throughout the South and West. They lowered the bar of criminality, transforming noncriminal acts, such as sitting on a bench for too long, into criminal offenses. Black codes required servitude if prisoners could not pay their fines. The business would pay the fine to the state in return for the prisoners’ labor.

Douglas A. Blackmon explains peonage in his book *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II*. He says peonage was “a system in which armies of free men, guilty of no crimes and entitled by law to freedom, were compelled to labor without compensation, were repeatedly bought and sold, and were forced to do the bidding of white masters through the regular application of extraordinary physical coercion.”

Convict leasing was the pervasive practice of leasing out prisoners to local industries. According to Robert Perkinson’s

Texas Tough: The Rise of America’s Prison Empire, by 1898 as much as 73 percent of Alabama’s total state revenue came from convict leasing. Whitney Benms explained in an *Atlantic* article, “American Slavery, Reinvented,” that convict leasing was cheaper than slavery because farmers and corporations didn’t have to concern themselves with the health of their workers.

While African Americans were 15 percent of the U.S. population in 1880, research by Ancestry.com revealed that African Americans comprised the majority of prisoners in the South and West, and their 15-hour workdays on chain gangs and in fields contributed to lucrative prison profits.

Convict leasing today

I marched with the other faith leaders, retracing the route of black ancestors who walked from the Alabama River and from the train station up Commerce Street. We boarded the bus and drove past historic buildings that once served as the slave depots that jailed these men, women, and children.

“What must it have been like,” I thought, “to live in times when your life only mattered as much as it profited others?”

I imagine it felt a lot like it does today.

While the Supreme Court clarified the illegality of peonage and “debtor’s prisons” in the 20th century, convict leasing is still alive and well. The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights reports that “37 states have legalized the contracting of prison labor by private corporations who bring their operations inside prison walls.” The report lists companies taking advantage of these contract opportunities. They include Nordstrom, Eddie Bauer, Motorola, Microsoft, Victoria’s Secret, Compaq, IBM, Boeing, AT&T, Texas Instruments, Revlon, Macy’s, Target, Nortel, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Honeywell, Pierre Cardin, and Lucent Technologies, among others.

Prison laborers work through in-house or state-run convict-leasing programs or through for-profit convict-leasing businesses. Colorado Correctional Industries (CCI), a self-funded state agency, is a leader among current convict-leasing agencies with “a burgeoning \$65 million business that employs 2,000 convicts at 17 facilities,” according to Jennifer Alsever’s 2014 report

that the Civil War ended slavery.

for *Fortune* magazine.

Businesses tend to support prison-labor programs because they offer a ready workforce and low bottom lines, Whitney Bennis' *Atlantic* report stated. Prison officials tend to focus on the virtue of meaningful work.

In *Angola for Life: Rehabilitation and Reform Inside the Louisiana State Penitentiary*, a documentary by *The Atlantic*, prison warden Burl Cain is noted for his use of prison labor to reform violent convicts serving life sentences without possibility of parole. When he first arrived at Angola, violence ruled the prison. He instituted a work program. According to Cain, the violence has abated.

But serious ethical questions remain: If work is compulsory, is it still virtuous? What if the employer is the state? Does the lack of state protection of prisoners against slavery and exploitation reveal a pervasive underlying belief in greater society that the imprisoned are not fully human? Worse, does it reveal a lack of belief that the imprisoned can be reformed? Finally, does the demographic breakdown of prisoners reveal the continued practice and acceptance of racialized slavery in the U.S.?

Degrading the image of God

The foundations of the Judeo-Christian understanding of work are established in the first chapter of Genesis. God makes all humankind in God's image and in the next breath calls humanity to exercise agency or stewardship over the rest of creation. God calls humanity to work and instills in every single human inherent dignity, worth, and worthiness of protection of the law. As a result, to be human means having inherent dignity—regardless of one's actions in this life—an inherent call to work, and the inherent protection of the law.

The Fair Labor Standards Act and the National Labor Relations Act protect American workers from exploitation. According to Bennis, prisoners are not explicitly exempt from these protections, but courts have ruled against application of the protections for the imprisoned. In essence, the courts have treated prisoners as if they are less than human—as if they are chattel slaves.

The spiritual implication is real: To force an entire class of people to work without the legal protections enjoyed by the rest of

Thirty-seven states have legalized the contracting of prison labor by private corporations.

society is to ignore and degrade the image of God among us. For the state to do this is to create a second class of citizenry—a class considered less than human. This is why slavery is considered sin. It degrades the image of God on earth.

In the same passage, God sets the standard for what it looks like to govern well: Good governance is about stewardship, not domination. Thus, for the state to compel work is an act of state domination and violence, not stewardship of citizens or the greater society. It reduces the state to the moral level of the criminal whose acts of domination and violence break trust with society.

The word "penitentiary" is derived from the word "penance." According to Harry Elmer Barnes' 1921 treatise "The Historical Origin of the Prison System in America," from the late 18th century through the 19th century, the church conceived penitentiaries to be places of penance that lead to reform. They advocated a combination of confinement and labor to create conditions that lead prisoners to reflect on and repent of their wrongs.

The use of work as a component of reform has arguably moral roots, but full restoration requires the recognition of prisoners' full humanity and full protection of their human rights.

Whole Foods announced last year that it would stop selling products made by prison labor. The company was responding to protests by the Houston-based advocacy group End Mass Incarceration Houston. The group protested Colorado Correctional Industries' exploitative low wages. According to a CCI official, prison workers' base pay starts at 60 cents per day, but they can earn \$300 to \$400 per month with incentives. At Angola penitentiary, prisoners might receive as little as 2 cents per hour. Neither wage is enough for prisoners to manage prison fees that typically shift the financial burden of incarceration from the state to the imprisoned and their families.

African Americans make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, but represent nearly 40 percent of the nation's prisoners. People of color comprise more than 60 percent of people marking time behind bars. With outsized presence, people of color are more vulnerable to exploitation, mistreatment, and forced work through the current convict-leasing system.

Making a choice

As the faith leaders returned from our pilgrimage last year and re-entered the EJI office, we learned that EJI had recently discovered that its building served as a pre-Civil War slave depot. The similarities between past and present haunted me.

When we think of the antebellum era, we often say to ourselves, "How could they accept a world where slavery was a viable economic system?" We forget that we, too, live in such a world.

The approaching season of Advent is nothing if not a season of hope for a better world. It is also the peak selling season for retailers. Over the next several months, mothers, fathers, and lovers will fill malls and online stores across the nation. Credit cards will swipe and corporate profits will rise.

With each purchase, shoppers and shareholders alike will make a choice. Shoppers will use their dollars to vote for a moral economy and shareholders will forego the highest possible profit and accept "enough" for the sake of a higher moral good.

Or, by their actions, they will benefit—knowingly or unknowingly—from the slave labor that results in lower prices and a "happier" holiday shopping season. For some people, at least. ■

Lisa Sharon Harper is chief church engagement officer for Sojourners and author of The Very Good Gospel: How Everything Wrong Can Be Made Right (June 2016).



"Blessed are the
peacemakers, for
they will be called
children of God."
—Matthew 5:9

THE BEATITUDES

Sojourners invited some of our
favorite contemporary authors—
religious and otherwise—to
offer their reflections on the
beatitudes. Seventh in a series.

Never Give Up

**Lessons from Desmond Tutu on working for justice
and waiting for God • by JOHN DEAR**

I FIRST HEARD Archbishop Desmond Tutu speak at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., sometime around 1987. It was at the height of apartheid in South Africa, and the world was just waking up to its horrors and organizing global economic sanctions.

Tutu spoke of an elderly woman he had met a few days earlier in Soweto. She told him that every night she got up at 2 a.m. for an hour in order to beg God solemnly for an end to apartheid. "I know we will win now," Tutu told us, "because God cannot resist the prayer of that poor old woman." With that, he burst into tears. Those tears of peace converted the thousands of us who crowded in to hear him. We had never heard such a witness for peace.

Brian Snyder/Reuters

After years of publicly opposing South Africa's apartheid regime, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.



RNS

Later, I came to know him as a friend. During my 2014 pilgrimage to South Africa, I spent a morning visiting the great man at his foundation headquarters in Cape Town. First, we had Mass together with his staff; then he catered a brunch for me and my friends. He and I helped ourselves to a plate of food and coffee, then sat together by ourselves for an hour.

"We do not have the right to give up this work," he told me. "Our sisters and brothers are suffering around the world, so we have to keep working for peace and justice till the day we die." I was amazed to hear that he planned to leave the next day for Iran. He was in his 80s, in bad health, and relentless.

He spoke of the millions of squatters living in total poverty around Cape Town and elsewhere. "We have the ultimate First World wealth and the worst Third World poverty, the biggest gap between rich and poor in the world," he said. "One percent

"To be neutral in a situation of injustice is to have chosen sides already. It is to support the status quo." —Archbishop Desmond Tutu

of the money for war and nuclear weapons could feed and house these poor people. Sometimes I say to God, 'What the heck is going on? Why don't you do something?'"

When I told him about the work for peace my friends and I were organizing in the U.S., he continued talking about God. "I'm so glad I'm not God," he said. "Think of the patience of God, waiting for us to get it, waiting for us to finally do the things you are doing! So few people see that we're all sisters and brothers!"

"Imagine what God went through during the Holocaust," he continued, "waiting while some of his children killed his other children and there was nothing he could do. God is omnipotent and omnipresent but he has decided to give us the gift of freedom, to let us choose to accept the goodness and love or not, and because God gave us this gift of freedom, God cannot intervene. So this omnipotent God is

completely weak and powerless before the evil we do. This is the God we have. God is very weak. I am so glad I am not God and that God is God."

"How do you keep going?" I asked.

"My favorite prophet is Jeremiah," he answered. "Do you know why? Because he cries a lot!" Then he leaned close to me and whispered, "I cry a lot too. I cry a lot. I cry every day. But think how much God cries! We have a God who weeps. God weeps because we don't get it. We don't understand that we are all sisters and brothers. So I cry a lot and always have. But I also laugh a lot too." With that he let out an uproarious laugh.

TOWARD THE END of our visit, I presented him with a large photo book of pictures of Martin Luther King Jr. and a handmade blue-and-white blanket from New Mexico, which he promptly threw over his shoulders. "You need to come more often!" he said with a big laugh. As he walked me to the door, he put his arm around me and said, "Never give up, John. Never give up!"

"There is a moral universe," he once said, "which means that despite all the evidence that seems to be to the contrary, there is no way that evil and injustice and oppression and lies can have the last word. ... That is what has upheld the morale of our people, to know that in the end, good will prevail." He learned that lesson from the South African people and shared it with the world. Evil will not triumph; good will prevail.

"In a situation where human life seems dirt cheap, with people being killed as easily as one swats a fly, we must proclaim that people matter and matter enormously," he once said. "To be neutral in a situation of injustice is to have chosen sides already. It is to support the status quo."

ARCHBISHOP TUTU models the peacemaking life for our times. He shows

Christians what a peacemaker looks like, and he encourages us through his own witness to pursue our own peacemaking vocations.

As we consciously seek to become peacemakers and meditate on God as a peacemaker, we begin to understand our true selves as sons and daughters of the God of peace. This is the root of peacemaking, the spirituality of nonviolence—that God is a God of peace, and that God's sons and daughters are peacemakers too. This is who we are; this is our true identity. We live in relationship with the God of peace as God's beloved sons and daughters, so we go forth into the world of war to make peace.

The culture of war always tries to name us, and we let them tell us who they think we are—you are Americans, you are liberals or conservatives, you are rich or poor, you are nobodies. But Jesus comes along and announces that every one of us is the son or daughter of the God of peace. With the announcement of our true identities, we willingly go into the culture of war as God's peacemakers, advocates of God's reign of peace.

Nonviolence, peacemaking, and the understanding of our true identities as God's sons and daughters lead us to an ever-deeper realization that every human being is our sister and brother, a beloved child of God. Inspired anew each day, we love everyone with a universal, nonviolent love. This process leads us deeper and deeper into new insights about who we are, who God is, what life is about, and where we are headed. ■

John Dear is the author of more than 30 books and a Catholic priest of the diocese of Monterey, Calif. This reflection is adapted from his most recent book, The Beatitudes of Peace: Meditations on the Beatitudes, Peacemaking, and the Spiritual Life (2016), reprinted with permission of Twenty-Third Publications.

Evening Walk

Here, *nobody* stands
for the national anthem.
There's no debate about
universal healthcare,
no talk of bigger border
walls or who will pay.
Here no one snapchat's,
sends selfies or sexts. Google
steals no one's idle hours.
No political parties here,
no signs to say white
lives matter too: everyone
gets it here. There's no
NRA, no second amendment,
no bumper-sticker zealots
declaring "if you can read
this you're in range."

No,
here at the Pilgrim Home,
just across from the summer
play of a city pool, it's all
cut-granite reverence
for beloved son, daughter,
dearest husband, moeder,
madre. On this level
expanse no fences
separate black and white,
they enclose. In this green
space the Mexican lies down
with the Dutch, and under
fresh rectangles the refugee
rests with the rich.

Here,
old, sleepy spruces cast
long layers of shadow
among the graves. Lilies
and orchids and roses revere
each silent name and date
and the brief dash between—
briefer than an evening walk,
than a child's splash.

*Mark Hiskes teaches English
at Holland Christian High
School in Holland, Mich.*

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'Too Blessed to Be Stressed'

... and other phrases Monica Coleman thinks the church should erase from its vocabulary.

"Talk about mental health. Talk about it from the pulpit."

IN A GIVEN YEAR, about one in five U.S. adults will experience mental illness of some kind. And though mental illness does not discriminate, African-American adults are more likely to experience serious mental health problems, but less likely to seek treatment, than white folks, due in part to the lasting effects of slavery, segregation, and other forms of race-based exclusion—effects that translate into socioeconomic factors such as poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse which are, in turn, risk factors for mental illness.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the factors that keep African Americans from receiving mental health services include a lack of health insurance, a distrust of the medical community, and conscious or unconscious bias among practitioners resulting in misdiagnoses. But NAMI also named another barrier to African-American mental health: the church. While one's "spiritual leaders and faith community can provide support and reduce isolation," explained NAMI, the church can also "be a source of distress and stigma." The report noted that even when medical care is necessary, African Americans turn to their families, communities, and churches rather than turning to health-care professionals.

None of this comes as a surprise to Monica Coleman, a professor of constructive theology and African-American religions at Claremont School of Theology in Southern California. Throughout her new memoir, *Bipolar Faith: A Black Woman's Journey with Depression and Faith*, Coleman navigates the challenges of race, gender, and the church as she heals from rape (committed by her then-boyfriend in seminary) and wrestles with a faith that ebbs and flows like the cycles of severe depression that began as she entered adulthood.

Sojourners assistant editor Betsy Shirley spoke with Coleman about mental health, social justice, and how the church might become a place that more fully fosters both.

Sojourners: Growing up, what kind of messages about mental health did you receive from your family and church?

Monica Coleman: The messages I received were none—no messages. People had other words for [mental illness] like "grief" or "the blues" or "crazy," but it wasn't something that was talked about. Sometimes there were coded messages—"Oh, she's always been sensitive" or "That person is 'touched'"—but these euphemisms displaced mental-health challenges on to other people who are unlike us. So I didn't have a real language for mental-health challenges, even though I was suicidal.

What did the church's silence on mental illness communicate to you? When you don't hear your experience in a church, especially from the pulpit, you think you don't matter, that God doesn't care, that your church doesn't care, and you feel lonely and isolated.

Do you hear harmful messages about mental illness in the church today? Yeah. The one that bothers me the most is when people say "I'm too blessed to be stressed," as if they were opposites. So you can't be blessed and stressed at the same time?

We also say these things that come from the Bible and sound good—"all things work together for the good of those who love God"—but what if you love God and things aren't working out? The end result is that if you're true to your experience, you blame yourself for not having enough faith. And I think that's probably the most damaging thing churches can do.

I've noticed that when Christians talk about mental health, they often emphasize the promise of healing.





What do you think is the good news of the gospel for people facing long-term mental illness? Immanuel—that God is with us, even during ongoing, long-term, I-wish-this-would-just-go-away suffering. When we hang too much of the gospel on “It’s going to get better,” then it’s like “When? How long? How?” And there are all those variables, and it’s different in every situation. The good news is that God is here with you now, loving you, holding you, being with you, and desiring your healing.

So how can churches be safe places for people who experience mental distress or disease? Talk about mental health. And don’t just do a special program on Thursday evening that no one’s going to come to; talk about it from the pulpit. When people see their spiritual leaders working on their own ongoing mental health, it lets people with mental issues know you’re not afraid to talk about it.

The other thing is “referring”: Anyone who’s been in religious leadership knows that we always get things that we cannot manage. But don’t just say, “Here’s a number for someone you can call.” Develop relationships with mental health professionals in your area so when you need to refer someone, you can say, “I know this person, this person is my friend, they will take care of you. Let me call them right now.” Really go the extra mile, and check back the next day. And don’t just drop ‘em off when you give them a card; pastors should let congregants know that they’re still available to walk with them and pray with them.

Finally, don’t have bad theology. We don’t need to have these theologies that suggest if your life isn’t perfect, it’s because you lack faith. No one’s life is perfect; faith wanes, it ebbs, it flows, we lose it, we gain it again.

What can the church learn about mental illness from how Jesus responded to those who were unwell?

What I like is that in the stories of Jesus healing people, there are other people around. These aren’t private sessions; it’s very much a communal act. Sometimes you hear Jesus condemn the community for judging someone too harshly, and there are other times when Jesus is saying, “Hey, do you want to be better?” It’s a reminder that our souls need to be healed and our attitudes need to be changed, and that’s very much a collective thing. So healing is an act of justice because it takes the entire community, not just one person with special powers, to make it happen.

Yet when the church talks about issues of social justice—climate change, immigration, poverty, racism, for example—mental health isn’t often included.

Why do you think that is? There’s still very much an idea that [mental health] is just a privatized issue between an individual and a therapist. We don’t see it as a public health issue, and I think that we should because there are so many factors that cause poor mental health. If you’ve lived in poverty, if you’ve lived in fear, if you’ve struggled to survive and had to deeply worry about your safety or your livelihood or whether or not you or your

Anne Simone



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Real

Real people. Real difference. Real world.

children will be fed, is it really reasonable to think that somebody is going to be okay?

If we recognized mental illness as an issue that is connected to social, economic, and political forces, what might change? If we thought about it that way, we might treat it more as a public health issue: talk about it more, have PSAs about it, and have more accessible ways of getting treatment.

Ironically, Christians who care about social justice—especially activists, organizers, and those in helping professions—often have great mental health needs by virtue of their work. When you're working in a social justice field, you become last because we're helpers: the last person to get fed, the last person to get what you need—even though we intellectually know that if I'm not okay, the whole thing falls apart.

So how can people involved in activism and ministry maintain their own mental health? You have to make self-care required. It's a hard thing even for me to say, because then something else won't be done. There are a limited number of hours in a day, but my self-care has to be in there. It might not be first, but it cannot be last. Unfortunately for many of us, it takes everything falling apart to realize that, but it's better if you don't let everything fall apart, if you don't have the breakdown and you don't have the burnout.

What other practices can be helpful? I'm a fan of therapy: Group therapy for social justice workers, individual therapy—if you can get to it, I think it's a great practice to begin. When I had these jobs in Nashville, there was a local retreat center for people in helping professions. And you could just go and unplug; nothing worked, there was no Wi-Fi or internet; just walk around nature, sleep, and eat. To decompress and read some Howard Thurman and get it together again. And that was perfect.

Christian leaders sometimes point to Jesus' selflessness and sacrifice as an excuse to ignore their own needs and self-care. What would you tell these leaders? We have to remember that Jesus went away by himself to pray; other times, Jesus was just hanging out with his friends eating—so you need to hang out with your friends and eat. That's healthy! It's a spiritual practice, and it will restore you. While we may be wounded healers, we want to be people with scars, not people who are bleeding and projecting our own challenges on to other people. ■

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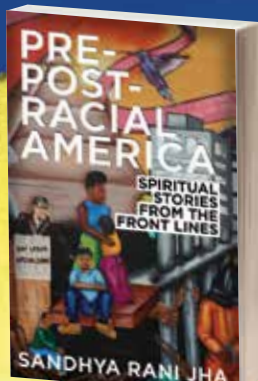


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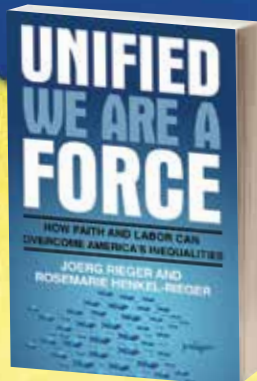


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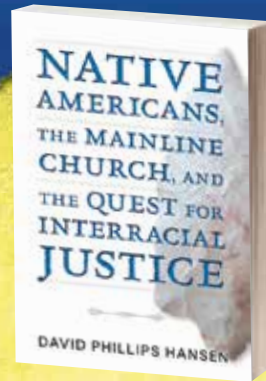


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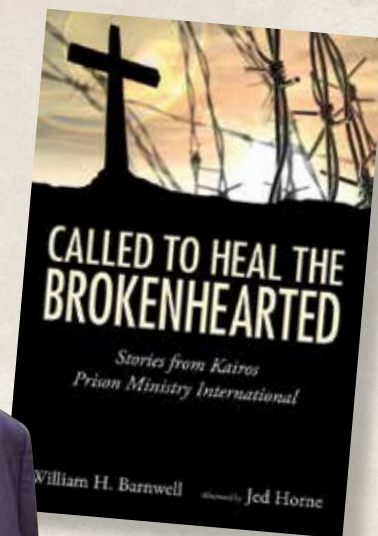


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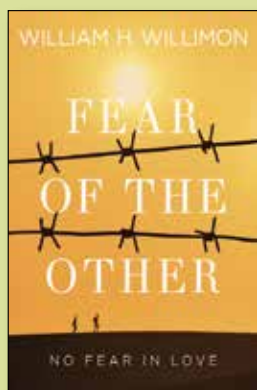


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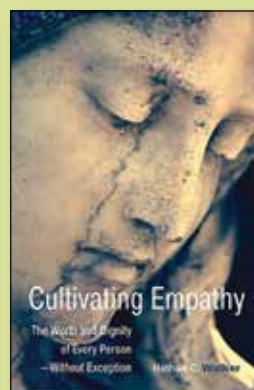


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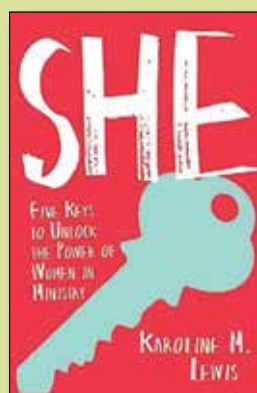
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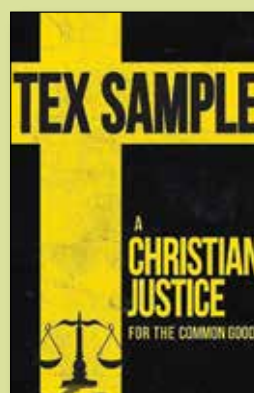
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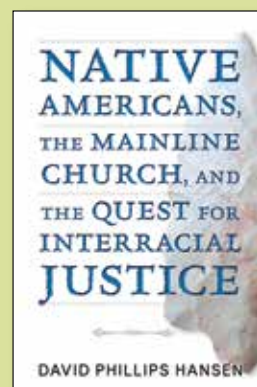
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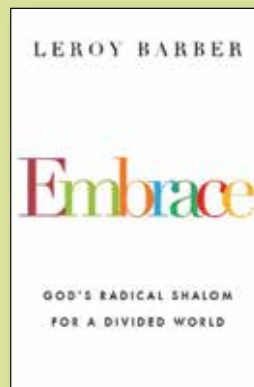
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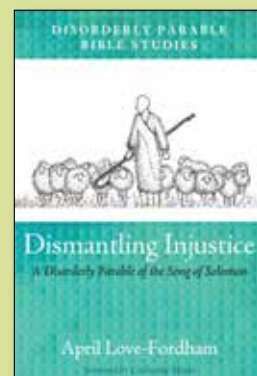
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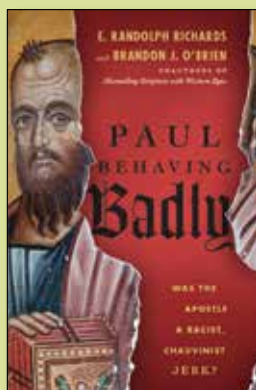
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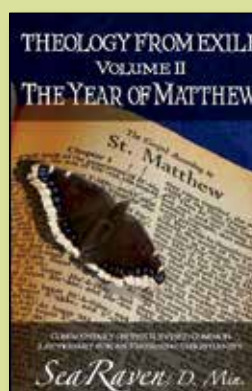
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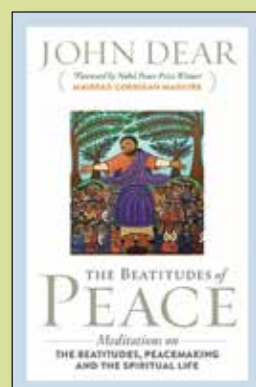
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fortresspress.com/iheartfrancis
Baptist pastor Donna Schaper says Pope Francis is a pope for all of us, and she has written him a series of letters—love letters, of a sort.



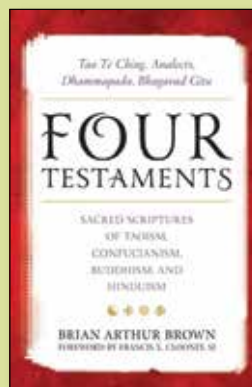
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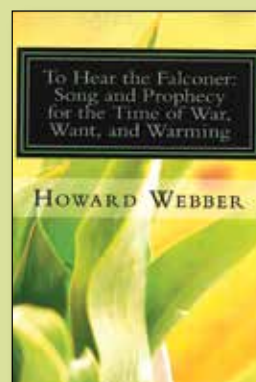
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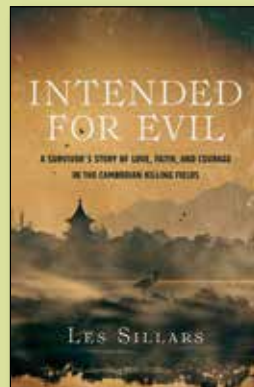
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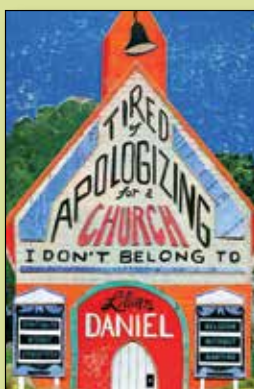
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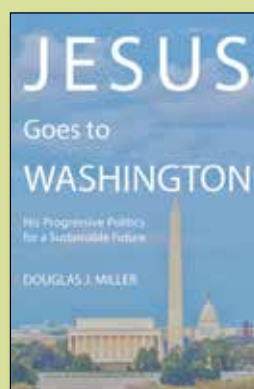
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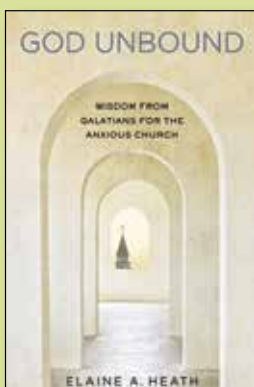
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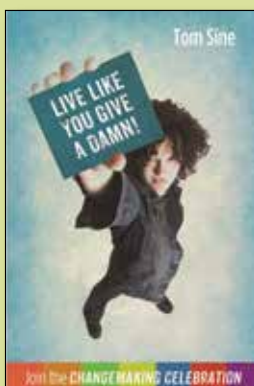
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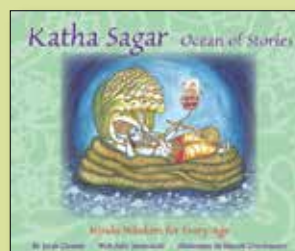
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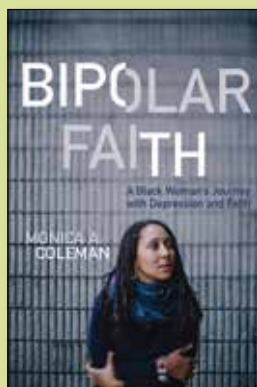
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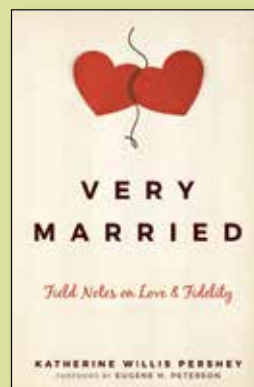
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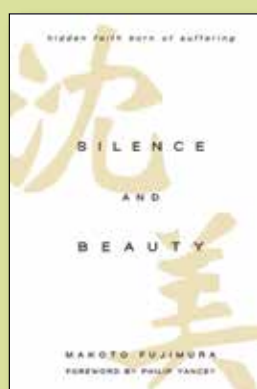
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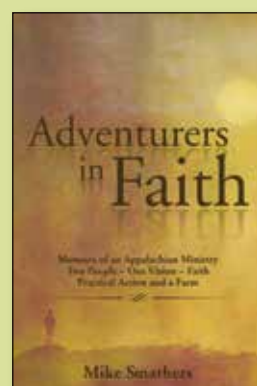
Silence and Beauty: Hidden Faith Born of Suffering

Makoto Fujimura
Intervarsity Press
ivpress.com/silence
Internationally renowned artist Makoto Fujimura reflects on Shusaku Endo's novel *Silence*, soon to be a major motion picture by Martin Scorsese. Grappling with the nature of art, pain, and culture, Fujimura finds connections to how faith is lived in contexts of trauma.



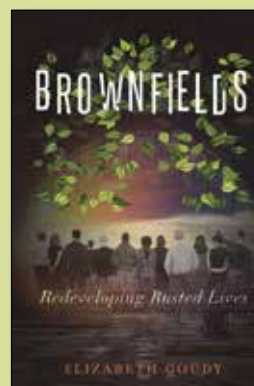
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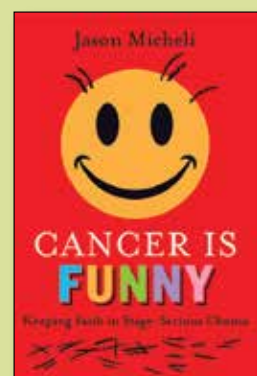
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Above, staff members of With Love Market, in south Los Angeles, including Karla Vasquez, far right.

By Julie Polter

The Food of Love and **Memory**

How to have your justice and eat it too.

KARLA VASQUEZ, director of community programs at With Love Market and Café in south Los Angeles, takes a live-and-let-live approach to cooking and nutrition. In classes at the recently opened market—whose mission includes increasing access to affordable fresh food in an underserved area—she encourages people to try new foods. But the bottom line, she told *Sojourners*: “You don’t like kale? I will *never* make you eat it.”

Vasquez doesn’t teach a catechism of “healthy vs. unhealthy” foods. A community organizer with culinary training, she instead focuses on giving class participants tools for healthier, but realistic, eating: how to understand nutrition labels and cook those healthy ingredients, so they can have food that will work for them. So in a class on “guilty pleasures” Vasquez discourages the guilt, instead offering ways to gently alter beloved dishes to maximize flavor and make them more nutritious, rather than give them up completely. She calls a class on all-vegetable dishes “cooking the rainbow,” emphasizing the beauty and taste of dishes made vibrant with a variety of produce—because she knows

With Love Market and Café photo



Inside CultureWatch

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Eric Mayle reviews *The Secret Chord*

“foodie” tendencies (such as an emphasis on the source and quality of ingredients and delight in flavors and beauty) are tied to broader justice concerns all along the food chain, as well as the environment. People are creatively digging into justice issues while celebrating food as a gift intrinsic to our biology, our cultures, and the world around us.

Feasting with generous simplicity

Two recently published cookbooks bring that spirit into home kitchens. One is a new edition of a classic that demonstrates that loving food while loving justice isn't new,

People are creatively digging into justice issues while celebrating food as a gift.

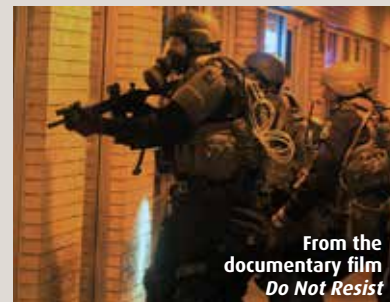
the other is an innovative, artful grassroots project published last year.

The *More-with-Less* cookbook was commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), a relief, development, and advocacy organization, and first published in 1976 as a response to global food crises. Its author, Doris Janzen Longacre, was a Mennonite who had served with MCC in Vietnam and Indonesia. She was deeply troubled by the disconnect between the industrialized West's culture of overconsumption and widespread hunger elsewhere. She saw *More-with-Less* as a starting point for those wanting to live more simply, which she refused to equate with dour deprivation.

The first edition of *More-With-Less* sold more than 847,000 copies worldwide, ending up not just in Anabaptist households but in the kitchens of volunteer group houses, students, latter-day hippies, and frugal cooks of many creeds. It mixed heartland standards with recipes sent in by Mennonites and others from around the world. Longacre explained nutrition basics (including the evergreen advice to eat more fruits and vegetables and less fat, sugar, and salt), cooking from scratch, and ways to eat less meat. Most important, she eloquently

Continued on Page 43

New & Noteworthy



From the documentary film *Do Not Resist*

FORCING THE LAW

Do Not Resist, the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival's Best Documentary winner, directed by Craig Atkinson, is a critical glimpse into the militarization of policing in the U.S. Where will hyped-up police training, battle armor, weaponry, and surveillance technology take us? Vanish Films

INQUIRING MINDS

Wary of science, or seeking a way to engage those who are? *How I Changed My Mind About Evolution: Evangelicals Reflect on Faith and Science* gathers stories from pastors, biblical scholars, theologians, and scientists. Edited by Kathryn Applegate and J.B. Stump. IVP Academic

JUST INSIGHTS

In *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*, Rev. angel Kyodo wil-liams, Lama Rod Owens, and Jasmine Syedullah are igniting conversations in Buddhist communities around the country about the legacy of racial injustice and white supremacy in their religion. North Atlantic Books

WORLDLY PRAYER

Through diverse writers and his own experience, Orthodox priest Michael Plekon looks beyond the formal and liturgical in *Uncommon Prayer: Prayer in Everyday Experience*. What are the permutations of the “Prayer of Pierogi Making”? Why should we not fear the “Prayer of Darkness”? Notre Dame Press

if she used the word “vegan,” many of her students might balk. “They’d say ‘That’s not for us—that’s what hipsters eat!’” she says.

With Love Market (withlovela.com) is a for-profit business that promotes a social bottom line. Along with the food market and classes, there is a café and a community garden. With Love pays its staff an above-average wage and specifically recruits employees from the neighborhood, hoping to help long-time Latino/a and African-American residents stay despite the pressures of gentrification. And it tries to create a space where long-term and newer residents of all backgrounds, plus students from the nearby University of Southern California, feel welcome.

“Foodie” often has elite connotations. But the With Love Market could be seen as an example of how the best of

Fake News and Real Lies

FORMER FOX NEWS chair Roger Ailes is the single individual most responsible for the toxically divisive and fact-challenged nature of America's current political culture. So it would be nice to think that Ailes' disgraced departure from the cable news channel he created might mark the end of an era. Nice, but probably delusional. For one thing, at this writing, day-to-day control of Fox News remains in the hands of Ailes acolytes, and Ailes himself may be back in the political consulting game as Donald Trump's debate coach. The Ailes era has been a very long one, and the changes he helped make are now deeply imbedded in the way we do politics, and even the way many people live their daily lives.

The scope and magnitude of Ailes' accomplishments are truly staggering. Forty-eight years ago he helped Richard Nixon become president by devising a media strategy that allowed the candidate to almost



stories, reported by real journalists, that were actually thinly veiled right-wing messages. This turned out to be a world-changing idea whose time had not yet come. The TVN motto, by the way, was "Fair and Balanced."

Ailes' impact in the 1980s was mostly as a political consultant. He fed one-liners to Ronald Reagan for his 1984 campaign debates. In 1988, he helped George H.W. Bush dodge questions about the Iran-contra conspiracy and perfected the art of dog-whistle politics with the Bush campaign's exploitation of the Willie Horton case. Horton was an African-American inmate of the Massachusetts prison system, who, during the governorship of Bush

opponent Michael Dukakis, used a weekend furlough as a chance to escape, later stabbing a man and raping a woman. During the campaign he was the explicit subject of TV ads, including one produced by a former Ailes employee working for an independent group, and an Ailes-designed official campaign ad that attacked Dukakis' criminal-justice record over images of prisoners walking in and out of a revolving door, including a black man resembling news photos of Horton.

In 1996, Rupert Murdoch made Ailes CEO of his new 24-hour news channel, and the rest is history.

As exhaustively detailed in the 2004 documentary *Outfoxed*, Fox looked and sounded like a news channel. But if you actually paid attention, stories were presented with a right-wing spin and most panels were stacked against the token "liberal" participants. The channel created a distorted version of reality that quickly became the new normal for millions of Americans. Fox's mind-numbing array of fast-moving graphics, multiple news crawls, blaring music, screaming heads, and mini-skirted blonde anchorwomen became a permanent backdrop in American living rooms, and even unavoidable in many public places. For instance, it's always on at my local McDonald's.

As a result, a significant minority of our fellow citizens are now absolutely sure of things that are simply not so. Saddam Hussein was responsible for 9/11. Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Climate change is a hoax. The president is a Muslim. "Illegal immigrants" commit more than their share of crimes. Etc., etc.

Ailes helped give us a world in which people are entitled not just to their own opinion, but to their own facts. And it's hard to see how we will ever recover from that. ■

Danny Duncan Collum teaches writing at Kentucky State University in Frankfort. He is the author of the novel White Boy.

Roger Ailes helped give us a world in which people are entitled not just to their own opinion, but to their own facts.

entirely avoid dealing with actual journalists. Instead, Ailes staged a series of "town hall" meetings that were designed to look like open forums, with the candidate answering questions from "real people." But the audiences were carefully selected, the questions were scripted, and the sessions were edited for national broadcast as paid advertisements.

This strategy of disguising propaganda as "real" events became a keystone of Ailes' career. In the 1970s, he ran a short-lived operation called Television News Inc. (TVN), funded by right-wing brewing tycoon Joseph Coors. TVN aimed to supply local TV news programs with professional, prepackaged "news"



Continued from Page 41

explained hunger issues and the relationship between living simply and living generously—cultivating a deeper appreciation for the gift that is food and gratitude for having enough.

For Longacre, getting down to basics with food meant more joy, not more guilt. As she wrote in the preface of the first edition, “[Mennonites] are looking for ways to live more simply and joyfully, ways that grow out of our tradition but take their shape from living faith and the demands of our hungry world.”

Longacre died just a few years after the original *More-with-Less* was published, but her presence endures in the revised and refreshed 40th anniversary edition, out this fall from Herald Press. Updates by Rachel



The 40th anniversary edition of the *More-with-Less* cookbook.

Marie Stone, author of *Eat with Joy: Redeeming God's Gift of Food*, are gracefully blended into Longacre's original text. The new preface by Stone notes that, while popular food culture has changed drastically since 1976, much remains the same. “[Longacre] could not have anticipated that eating locally and seasonally would become a mark of hipness, and that many people would begin to spend more time watching cooking shows than actually cooking,” Stone writes. “She could not have known that dietary fads—and global food crises—would always be with us.”

While new recipes have joined the mix, many reliable classics remain (with tweaks for contemporary techniques and ingredients). How often can you find one cookbook that teaches both hunger awareness and the importance of celebration, and includes recipes for German pork chops, English muffins, gado gado, and homemade cheese?

Reclaiming ancient methods

Milpa! From Seed to Salsa is part cookbook, part art book, and part apologetics for traditional agriculture. It too argues for sustainable values for global survival. But unlike the eclectic-but-European-leaning



From *Hell or High Water*

DESPERATE PURSUITS

A GRIZZLED LAW enforcement officer, days from retirement, looking for one last challenge. A team of bank robbers, one with noble(ish) motivation, the other psychopathic. Great American vistas to enforce the notion that what we're watching is Important. So far, so clichéd.

But **Hell or High Water**, Taylor Sheridan's script directed by David Mackenzie, brilliantly transcends such hokum in favor of utterly honest dialogue, a plausible plot, and real settings. The drama, as embodied in career-highlight performances from its leads, takes on an almost-Shakespearean gravity. Two brothers steal from a bank that's been stealing from them. People get hurt, but they were hurting already, so who cares? And the Old Man of the West experiences the lack of resolution that may result from even the most dogged pursuit.

Marcus (Jeff Bridges) and Alberto (Gil Birmingham), Texas Rangers chasing bad guys, have known each other for years. Marcus ignorantly throws racial insults at Alberto, believing them to be affectionate, while Alberto quietly winces. The memory of land theft and genocide is in Alberto's bones, his half-Mexican, half-Comanche personhood betrayed by the forebears of the very authority he seeks to uphold.

Meanwhile, Toby (Chris Pine) and Tanner (Ben Foster) rob branches of the bank that's been trying to manipulate their family. Like all families, it's a family with secrets, but the lack of healthy community bonds has allowed those

secrets to wreak havoc on the lives of its members. There's no support for moving beyond the trauma of a violent upbringing, just resignation to things as they are and belief that maybe a bit of money could get them out of it. A bleak Texas standing in for a bleak America, one in which the aching desire to connect is buried under economic desperation and get-rich-quick schemes. Even the church is in on it—a televangelist merely replicates the system of social inequality and betrayal of trust. People need help, but no one shows them how to ask for it.

Hell or High Water is a great American film because it reaches into the past—both of the nation and of the cinema—and says something new, something that might help us live better. It invites us to consider not only how to address situations of injustice, but also our place on the spectrum of privilege that causes us to benefit from or lose as a result of it.

John Wayne could have played Marcus, but he wouldn't have been self-reflective. Marcus, as played by Bridges, whose beautiful on-screen exploration of white American masculinity has been underway for almost 50 years now, wants to do the right thing, to make people's lives better. He's just not quite ready to ask if the system that made him is part of the problem. ■

Gareth Higgins is an Irish writer and founder of moviesandmeaning.com and www.irelandretreats.com.

Judith Haden

recipe roster of *More-with-Less, Milpa!* is utterly rooted in the specific foodways of the Indigenous people of the Mixteca Alta region of Mexico.

This region boasts a deeply rooted Indigenous culture. But it is also home to one of the highest soil erosion rates in world, due to unsustainable land-use practices, including chemical-intensive mono-cropping of corn, which became widespread in the 1980s.

"Milpa" is the ancient system, originating in Mesoamerica, of planting complementary crops together in a single field. In the classic combination of corn, beans, and squash, the beans fix nitrogen used by the corn, the beans climb the corn for sunlight, and the squash leaves discourage weeds. Through a locally formed agricultural/environmental organization, the Center for the Integral Campesino Development of the Mixteca



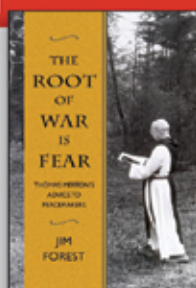
From *Milpa! Shared food for all at a Día de San José celebration in Oaxaca, Mexico.*

(CEDICAM), local farmers have developed a milpa plan that produces up to 12 crops from the same plot, including corn, beans, green beans, squash, tomatillo, huitlacoche (edible corn fungus), wild greens, medicinal herbs, and forage. This approach stabilizes and restores depleted soil.

The essays in *Milpa!* are written by Phil Dahl-Bredine—who, with his wife, Kathy, has lived and worked on sustainable agriculture in the region for more than 15

years; the two of them were Maryknoll lay missionaries—and by CEDICAM co-founder Jesús León Santos. They argue that shifting policies to support the milpa model of small-scale, diversified farming is a better answer to food scarcity than subsidizing monoculture industrial agriculture.

This could be dry stuff, but the writings on sustainability, seed diversity, and Mixteca culture and history are engaging and are combined with local recipes tested by Oaxaca, Mexico-based chef Susana Trilling and gorgeous photos by photographer Judith Cooper Haden. The words, images, and mouth-watering recipes together create an evocative portrait of the power of traditional cultures and what is at stake as they are pressed by climate change, international



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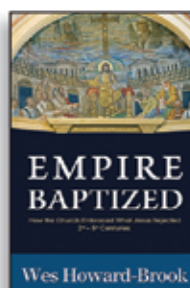
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her growth as a spokesperson for women's equality in the Catholic Church. . . ."

—ROSALIE RIEGLE, in *Sojourners*

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economics, and exploitive development.

Co-author Dahl-Bredine told *Sojourners*, “It may be that the values still inherent in the worldview and the communities of these Indigenous peoples ... are the very values on which the human family can build a viable future on the planet.”

Past and future meet at the table

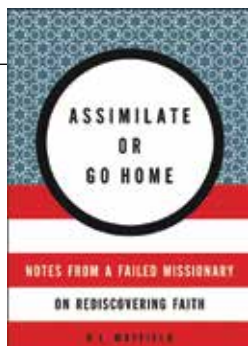
It turns out that Vasquez, whose parents left El Salvador in the 1980s because of civil war, is planning a cookbook of her own, based on interviews with Salvadoran women about their cooking and memories. It would be “a conversation between future, past, and present,” she says. It might nudge out some culinary cultural imperialism—preserving and spreading recipes so that other descendants of Salvadoran immigrants (and the

“It may be that the values of these Indigenous peoples ... are the very values on which the human family can build a viable future on the planet.”

rest of us too) can know and celebrate a delicious heritage. As for the stories, Vasquez already knows that they often will involve trauma. But this too is a vital part of the conversation. Stories, even painful ones, sustain cultures as food sustains bodies.

As food-centered holidays approach, perhaps a suitable watchword for our prayers and meal planning is “enough.” Enough food access and education for all to creatively take charge of their health. Enough discomfort with the hunger of others to live differently. Enough respect for traditional communities that both milpas and fiestas can multiply. Enough space and time to break bread together, linger over the foods your great-grandmother used to make, and share stories about family, the good and the bad. Just enough. More than you can imagine. ■

Julie Polter is a senior associate editor of Sojourners. For more information on Milpa!, or to order, email kpdbmx@gmail.com.



Reviewed by Greg Williams

THE FAR SIDE OF CYNICISM

Assimilate or Go Home: Notes from a Failed Missionary on Rediscovering Faith, by D.L. Mayfield. HarperOne.

A FRIEND JUST told me something wise: Be skeptical but never cynical. In *Assimilate or Go Home*, a series of essays about her ministry and faith experience, D.L. Mayfield tells an even rarer story—of her movement from idealism through cynicism into a deeper faith. She manages to avoid sinking into an easy “wisdom” that simply excuses apathy.

Mayfield’s journey into an unperfected ministry starts when she is an idealistic high schooler, wanting to serve immigrants and refugees in her community. She discovers that this isn’t easy, as she works with and sometimes lives among Somali Bantu refugees, first in Bible college and then through her 20s. Even her best efforts aren’t what the community wants or needs. Instead, she finds her intentions thwarted and her ideals coming up short as she teaches English, mentors teens, and helps friends struggle through obstinate bureaucracies. All of this activity stalls in the face of a dramatically different culture and people who don’t want to be “saved.” This sense of frustration is mirrored in the structure of the book: We are never given much sense of the timeline of Mayfield’s life, just that the same challenges persist.

Mayfield describes baking a cake for the wedding of a girl she had mentored from a Somali Bantu family. This girl was only a junior in high school when she married and moved across the country with her new husband. Mayfield finds herself wondering if all the “countless conversations about colleges and careers ... harping on equitable marriages, on waiting to have children, on finishing high school” might have made things worse.

But Mayfield stays committed. Teaching women to read who, after months, remain unable to spell their names; drinking coffee with women whose husbands have committed suicide; and taking every opportunity to make Funfetti cakes and feed people. She stays in place, befriending people and accepting the grace that they offer. And this changes things, somehow. Mayfield resists pat conclusions, resting in God’s unfailing love.

Mayfield bookends her story with two essays about that evangelical classic: Vacation Bible School.

While in high school, Mayfield and a bunch of her suburbanite friends went down into the projects and pamphleted the area about VBS. They wondered how the exhausted moms coming to the doors could endure. The teenagers taught “happy little songs about Jesus to little children who were just barely treading water.” Leaving after a week, Mayfield is unsure what good she did in these kids’ lives, but she knows that her life has been irrevocably changed. She had been blessed by those she came to serve—cliché but real.

Years later, Mayfield is married with kids of her own and has just moved into a cheap apartment complex with many refugee and immigrant neighbors. High-energy high schoolers come to her door to invite her kids to VBS. She sees the scene through their eyes: exhausted mom, dingy apartment, and kids who desperately need Jesus and the wholesome fun that earnest teenagers can provide.

Mayfield feels the knee-jerk reaction of anyone told they need to be “saved,” especially after hearing the sin-focused VBS gospel. Then she realizes: These teenagers enthusiastically sharing Jesus with her kids are loved by God too. Even if they aren’t helping as much as they think, God doesn’t spurn even flawed attempts to serve.

God’s love encompasses not just those we want to “save” but also us trying to do the saving. Grace goes all the way down, and part of growing up spiritually is extending that grace to everyone, not just the sympathetic.

That is the faith beyond cynicism that Mayfield models. Though the book’s subtitle claims she is a failed missionary, she preaches a gospel that I desperately needed to hear. ■

Greg Williams is the communications director at an advocacy organization in Washington, D.C.

Reviewed by Eric Mayle

LESSONS IN SIN AND REDEMPTION

The Secret Chord: A Novel, by Geraldine Brooks. Penguin Books.

*Now I heard there was a secret chord
That David played and it pleased the Lord,
But you don't really care for music, do you?*

IT IS SAID that Leonard Cohen's song "Hallelujah" has been covered more than 300 times by various artists since its 1984 release. Perhaps one of the reasons it has endured is because of the stories it tells about tragic biblical figures such as King David, who was simultaneously murderer and a "man after God's own heart."

Inspired by her son, who played an arrangement of "Hallelujah" on the harp for his bar mitzvah, Geraldine Brooks explores the profoundly paradoxical character of David in her novel *The Secret Chord* (paperback edition out this fall). Brooks' unwillingness to resolve this paradox invites readers into the story to wrestle with the categories of good and evil and the nature of repentance. After the dust settles, however, readers will find that it is not the depth of David's repentance but the abuse of power that defines his kingship.

The timeline in Brooks' novel roughly spans David's early ascent to power through his death and Shlomo's coronation (Brooks uses the transliteration of the Hebrew to spell names, for example Shlomo instead of Solomon). Drawing upon the tradition that the histories of 1 and 2 Chronicles were written by the prophet Natan, David's story is told from the perspective of the prophet. During the first battle that David is not on the battlefield with his men, the frustrated, middle-aged king commissions Natan to write his biography, so that David's descendants may know "what manner of man" he was. David gives Natan a curious list of people to interview, including individuals that David knows will be severely critical of him, such as his estranged wives and brother. This narrative detail—like many others in the novel—serves as an explanation for scripture's curiously flawed portrait of Israel's most powerful king.

Natan's interviews with these people

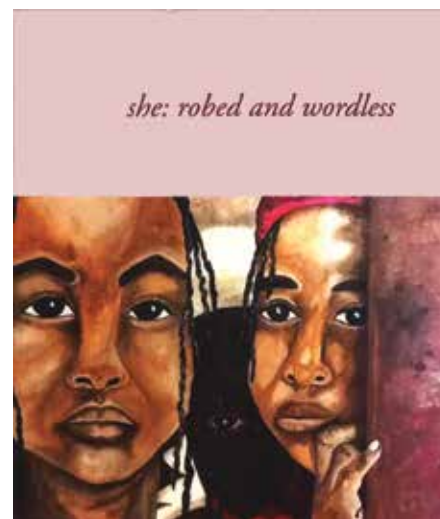
from David's past offer varying perspectives on and insights into David's character. It is also during this restive period that the king commits his basest abuse of power—an adulterous night with Bathsheva and the murder of her husband, Uriah. Its multiple perspectives, moral complexity, political intrigue, and violence give the novel a texture not unlike George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series (aka *Game of Thrones*).

Brooks weaves together scripture, historical research, and Jewish tradition to reimagine David's story. Readers will recognize the basic narrative thread of the David story found in 1 Samuel through 1 Kings. But Brooks expands well beyond that, as she teases out the rough edges, gaps, and oddities found in the Bible's narrative.

What is perhaps most compelling about *The Secret Chord*'s portrait of King David is his abuse of power. Brooks boldly depicts David as a man who is as utterly ruthless as he is devout with no attempt to harmonize this dichotomy. In the end, however, it is the ruthlessness of a young king who unhesitatingly slaughters innocents that remains in the minds of readers. It is the oft-repeated phrase Brooks puts in David's mouth—"by any means necessary"—that best captures David's rule in the novel. And it is this same rhetoric that is found in current political discourse.

In an election season fraught with concerns about the misuse of power, *The Secret Chord* invites readers to reflect upon its leaders and the means by which they govern. In particular, it invites readers to critically reflect upon leaders who invoke religion to support their candidacy and to sanction malfeasance. The only question that remains to be answered is whether or not those vying for power today can, like Israel's leader, publicly repent of their abuses. ■

Eric Mayle is the executive director of Centenary Community Ministries Inc. in Macon, Ga. He blogs at maconroom.com.



Reviewed by Jill Crainshaw

HEARING THE SILENCED ONES

she: robed and wordless, by Lou Ella Hickman. Press 53.

SHE: ROBED AND WORDLESS, by Sister Lou Ella Hickman, is a word-feast of poetry about often-overlooked women in the Bible. Hickman creates a beautiful narrative and poetic arc as she explores biblical terrain. I celebrate how the book gives voice and imagery to our foremothers. Each poem is well-crafted, and the book has been organized to guide readers into the question editor Tom Lombardo asks in his introduction to the book: "After Eve, who is the next woman named in the Bible?"

Hickman, a Catholic sister, is an oft-published poet who in this book weaves together with striking lyrical threads scriptural narratives and her own substantive imaginings about the hopes, dreams, and fears of women about whom we know very little. Many women in the Bible are unnamed and have no voice, but Hickman tunes our ears to listen for these ancient unheard ones. In doing so she invites us to see and hear the countless but wisdom-filled "robed and wordless" women in our communities today. ■

Jill Crainshaw is the Blackburn Professor of Worship and Liturgical Theology at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Poetic Justice?

YOU HAVE TO feel for Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway, who probably gets tired of hearing about his own death.

Kamen, still very much alive, introduced the self-balancing vehicle in 2001. But since 2010, when new Segway Inc. owner Jimi Heselden accidentally drove a Segway off a cliff to his death, popular memory has conflated the tragedy with its creator.

There are a number of plausible reasons for this case of false identification, but one of the most persistent deals with moral comeuppance: A person invents an obnoxious, silly vehicle; a person dies from the frivolous invention. It isn't kind, but that sort of morality tale is enduringly satisfying. When we despair for humanity, our inner cynic appreciates when humanity gets what's coming.

Kamen isn't the first victim of misapplied poetic justice—fascination with the archetype of the doomed inventor stretches back to

own inertia—a triumph against the hubris of building something nonessential, and the idealism of thinking it could change the world. To stop at a moral tale of disaster is to keep the focus on poetic justice and our own wisdom. It also, conveniently, keeps us from having to face the complexity of, “What do we do about it now?”

THIS IS INTERESTING—and unsettling—when you consider our country's relationship with democracy this year. Democracy is a radical invention, and our desire for poetic justice is at a historic high: Not since John Quincy Adams has a sitting president so persistently inveighed against a presidential nominee; never has a party convention staged a public trial for another nominee's alleged crimes.

Lurking behind the breathless fascination with this election season seems to be a visceral desire to see Donald Trump, especially, “get his” in sensational fashion (almost regardless of what that sensational ending is—humiliating failure or crowning success). The fact of a former reality star

securing a viable candidacy for president while largely ignoring the assumed rules of politics can be seen as poetic justice for people's assumptions that our invented political system was too big to fail. What will happen as this election's increasingly sensational rhetoric soars too close to the sun? Did we as a nation create the conditions for hubris to thrive in our politics, and do we deserve the result? Have we all “had it coming?”

Reading an election through an Icarus lens can be dangerous—not the least for how it generates a fatalistic disregard for the real policies and platforms that affect real members of our society. “Every fiction is an illusion,”

writes Michael Solana of our increasing appetite for dystopian narrative. “[But] the very real danger here is [humanity's] tendency to look to [one's] illusion for inspiration, which is the foundation on which we build society.”

But one piece of the Icarus story is helpful to remember. In flying too high, he ended up alone—against his father's counsel, without the support, ingenuity, or course-correction of others. And this, at least for now, is the antithesis of our political system.

Democracy was an innovation by Greek aristocrats at a time when economic inequality and rule by force had gone sour. “Rule by the people, for the people” told a story of citizenship, community, and a voice. The system was motivated toward participation. And the practice of democracy has been a steadily evolving exercise in communal moral imagination ever since.

As Solana reminds us, “The stories we tell ourselves can save us,” too. Poetic or not, justice requires participation. It is often the routine work of resisting the Icarus narrative—not because an attempt to soar is daring, or even because it is dangerous, but because it is lonely.

SYLVAN DOES REGRET inventing the Keurig, and it's easy to shame him for his wasteful invention. But then he designed an eco-friendly solution—and the corporate owners ignored it. Then they started trying sustainable solutions, too—they're not that great yet. But they're working on it.

That's the narrative we've got right now for our country, and it's not a pretty one, but it's a perfectly decent moral to the story: We're working on it. ■

Catherine Woodiwiss is Sojourners' senior associate web editor.



The moral of the story? We're working on it.

Greek myth, punctuated by names from Hamlet (whose snide “'tis the sport to have the engineer / hoist with his own petard” unwittingly championed his impending demise) to Alfred Nobel, who, despite popular myth, did not actually have many regrets about inventing dynamite.

John Sylvan, inventor of the Keurig single-cup coffee dispenser, is a recent case of the regretful kind—he publicly laments having introduced the waste-belching quick-fix to bulk coffee, and later designed a fully recyclable prototype that would remedy the environmental concern. But most of us only know (or care?) about that first part.

There's something viscerally satisfying in the demise of a technological Icarus. Such falls let us root for our

World's About to End?

WITH SO MANY dust-collecting pews, judgment is not the theme on most religious leaders' lips. The audience that took seriously the "signs of the times" is typically in nursing homes and cemeteries. Millennials and Gen-Xers find the subject distasteful at best, a fairy tale at worst. I'm not sure there's any way to shirk the theme in this season. Judgment is on the lips of God. We better find ways to take God's word seriously. And this word of judgment is for all people, no matter your generation.

God's judgment is always twofold: a word against those who withhold justice and equity from communities on the margins, and a word of blessing promising those on the margins that shalom is already here and yet to come.

Still, God's judgment is never abstract or vague; it is directed to particular people and communities. We have to search for those places in our own communities where justice and equity, where God's shalom, is held hostage for the few.

Focused on one set of the many injustices in our world, the Black Lives Matter movement has sustained a witness for justice and equity for four years now. This movement is part of a long tradition and contemporary global movement for the liberation of black and brown lives. Calling out white supremacy is a prerequisite to taking God's word seriously. White fragility and guilt will have to be exorcised. Black and brown assimilation to whiteness will need to be lovingly named. The vision of God's future will keep us on this path. Our work in these weeks is continuously to call forth God's vision of shalom for all people through the flourishing of black and brown lives.



Brandon Wrencher is pastor of Blackburn's Chapel United Methodist Church and executive director of Blackburn Community Outreach in Todd, N.C.

[NOVEMBER 6]

Resisting Whiteness

Job 19:23-27a; Psalm 17:1-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17; Luke 20:27-38

I KNOW TOO much about end-times movies. They were shown at the close of Vacation Bible School when I grew up. They were the best strategy for loading up the final altar call on the last night. I recall my terror when the dreaded Antichrist would be revealed—always a white male with slicked back hair and the meanest eyes you've ever seen.

My VBS days are over and I've grown out of rapture theology. But as far as the Antichrist or "this lawless one" in the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians (verse 3) is concerned, Jesus Christ gives better criteria than do the movies. "[The lawless one] opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God" (verse 4). I've learned that the white man isn't the devil, but "whiteness" is. Theologian J. Kameron Carter writes, "The white, Western god-man is an idol that seeks to determine what is normal. It is a norm by which society governs the body politic or

regulates, measures, evaluates, and indeed judges what is proper or improper, what is acceptable or suspicious citizenship."

Those movies were still onto something. "White" folks are predisposed to the demon of white supremacy. People of every tribe, nation, and tongue are tempted by its force. That devil has sought to kill, steal, and destroy human and creaturely identity throughout history. We'd do well not to be deceived by its talk of progress, restoration, and the "post-racial." Whiteness always claims what alone belongs to the Lord, to bring forth that day of making all things right. We must resist the religion of whiteness at all costs to ourselves and to our neighbors. Carter reminds us, "The 'god' of (or that is) whiteness is a god toward which we must be thoroughgoing atheists and religionless." Whiteness won't live in the day of the Lord. Our true Redeemer lives now and forevermore (Job 19:25-27). On that great day we'll be seen for who we truly are,

a beloved community with the equity and diversity in which our God has created us.

[NOVEMBER 13]

Sing Your Joy

Malachi 4:1-2a; Psalm 98;
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19

THE REAL BREAD of Black Lives Matter is not the fight itself. It's not winning campaigns or making policy changes. (Yes, these are a crucial *part* of the work.) The bread, the real sustenance, of the movement is joy. Joy is the hurling off what evil has to say about you. Joy is the lightness you feel knowing that the vision is true, even if it's in the distance. No length of time is ever an indication that the Spirit of equity and righteousness has expired. "For you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness *shall* rise, with healing in its wings" (Malachi 4:2). Healing entails judgment for those who have taken on the wickedness and pride of whiteness, those of whom Jesus tells us to "beware" (Luke 21:8). In that day, whiteness will no longer be able to stand.

The real workers of liberation in this world aren't fearful of any religious leaders or law enforcement or family that aligns with whiteness. Not even death will stop their fight for liberation. Joy gives them endurance. They stand with the One for whom judgment and joy are inseparable. But judgment is not reserved only for those aligned with whiteness. Here's the warning for those who are content with waxing philosophical about and being benchwarmers for liberation: Joy is earned. Joy is the virtue that marks the continuity between our contemporary liberation movement for black and brown lives and those moral traditions of the past. Like our foreparents in the struggle, the Black Lives Matter movement demonstrates its joy through song. In the face of death and persecution, may all of creation join its song of victory with Kendrick Lamar's lyrics: "We gon' be alright! Do you hear me, do you feel me? We gon' be alright!"

"Preaching the Word," Sojourners' online resource for sermon preparation and Bible study, is available at sojo.net/ptw.

[NOVEMBER 20]

Cross and Noose

Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 46;
Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43

JESUS IS MURDERED by the state. He is betrayed by his own religious leaders. His crime? Extending God's shalom for the poor and outcast, and judgment for those who put barriers in the way of that shalom. Jesus dared to put poor and outcast people first, entitled and powerful people last. Jesus claimed that only when the lives of the poor and outcast mattered would all lives matter. Jesus proclaimed #BlackLivesMatter. The result? The lynching of God.

Black Lives Matter demonstrates and proclaims that black and brown lives must be prioritized in order for our world to be truly equitable and peaceful. Black and brown bodies are being lynched by the state every day in our country: police brutality,

"Racism is not getting worse; it's getting filmed." —Will Smith, actor

mass incarceration, economic and health disparities, underresourced schools, redlining, grotesque deportation practices, and the list goes on.

The political establishment tells Jesus that his death is his own responsibility. The political establishment tells black and brown people that they need to pull up their "bootstraps" and clean up their own communities. The political establishment is never held accountable for murder. The religious establishment cooperates with the murder of Jesus. The religious establishment cooperates with the killing of black and brown bodies. The prophets of our time must speak forth against the works of the establishment and in support of the works of the Lord, declaring: "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture" (Jeremiah 23:1). We must reflect the voices of those Jeremiahs of our time, such as James Cone, who has challenged us in saying that "until we can see the cross and the lynching tree together, until we can identify Christ with a 'recrucified' black body hanging from a lynching tree, there can be no genuine understanding of Christian identity in

America, and no deliverance from the brutal legacy of slavery and white supremacy."

[NOVEMBER 27]

Get Woke!

Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11-14;
Matthew 24:36-44

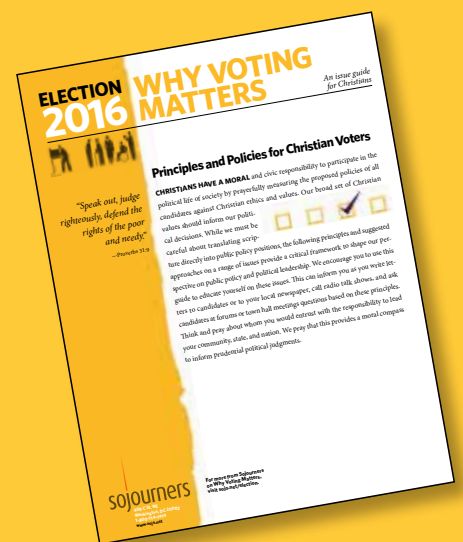
FOR DECADES, black folks across America have known and experienced the hypocrisy and injustice of U.S. law enforcement. Modern technology—in the form of smartphones and social media—has recently put police brutality upon black and brown bodies on display for the rest of the country. As actor Will Smith said recently, "Racism is not getting worse; it's getting filmed." Preachers and other leaders within black and brown communities have for many years been shining the light on these dark (mal)practices in our country. They have been awake (see Romans 13:11)! They have learned this restless way of life from a long tradition of black resistance in America that insists on tirelessly telling the truth about black and brown suffering. It

is this same tradition that has taught many black folks to stop waiting for justice and freedom in the "sweet by and by." Historically, that place *cooperates* in the war upon their bodies and communities. That is a place of darkness. The god of that place is not the One whose house shines with the light of peace. Those of us who are "awake," as Paul says in Romans 13, have "put on the armor of light" to fight these forces of darkness in our land.

But America, especially white America, is asleep. Asleep to the blood of black and brown bodies flooding the streets. Actor Jesse Williams captured this comatose state of white America when he said, "Even with videotaped evidence of police destroying black people, many freedom-loving Americans remain unconvinced of a systemic problem." America, don't let this blood now on your hands sweep away your soul from the One who brings salvation. America, wake up! Awake from your great slumber of violence, greed, and subjugation. While you eat, drink, and marry, as Jesus warns in Matthew 24, you miss the Son of Man in your midst, unexpected, among those who are awake to the dark lie of war. ■



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A Time of Reckoning

WITH ONLY a month left before the start of the annual war on Christmas—my Bill O'Reilly desk calendar keeps me up to date on all the seasonal liberal conspiracies—there is still time to plan this year's shopping, starting with a new president.

Despite the fact that most voters are in critical need of a discerning hand to guide their choice—a choice that requires more thought than is possible during the commercial breaks on “Dancing With the Stars”—Sojourners is forbidden from providing that guidance because of restrictions from the Internal Revenue Service.

But this election is too important for us to quietly surrender to 501(c)(3) rules, since acquiescence is the final sanctuary of the coward, if he knew how to spell it. This year, with our nation so divided, it is time for Sojourners to issue a clear endorsement of one candidate, regardless



add more pepperoni. You just can't rush bad pizza.

But where was I? Oh yes, our brazen act of defiance against restrictions of our 501(c)(3) status. It should be noted that 501(c)(4) nonprofits are allowed more leeway, as long as their work is educational and contributes to the “social welfare” of the country. The fact that many 501(c)(4)s are mainly promoting the social welfare of industrial polluters, gun manufacturers, and other groups of interest to Karl Rove is beside the point.

In this time of civic unrest and anxiety, Sojourners is drawing a line in the sand. Nope, it got washed away. Dag. Okay, we're drawing a line in this limousine with our house key and then running away real fast before we get caught. Kidding. That would be wrong, especially if it's just a rental for prom night. No, we're making a strong statement of unapologetic partisanship for the sake of our nation.

Therefore—federal regulations be damned—Sojourners is defiantly proud to endorse Jimmy Carter to be the next president of the United States. Assuming it's still 1980.

And why couldn't it be 1980? So many Americans today are longing for the 1950s, those simpler times when television was as black and white as the issues, when minorities, gay people, and women all knew their place (underfoot, out of sight, and several steps behind, respectively). Americans pine for the 1950s, so why not meet them halfway? Which is the 1980s, give or take.

So we're coming out strong for Jimmy Carter, this modest farmer of peanuts, this evangelical Christian with a strong social conscience who teaches the Bible in Sunday school, except for the gross parts that make the kids giggle. He is from the Bible belt, after all, a belt that for many years has been cinched so tight it's cut off circulation to the brain, causing many of its citizens to be intolerant, prejudiced, and blind to the teachings of the very Bible their belt is made of.

CARTER IS running against Ronald Reagan, a former Hollywood liberal who goes to church only for funerals and the occasional wedding, two of which were his. He is running on the campaign slogan of “Morning in America,” a meaningless phrase that nonetheless brings a tear of empty promise to the eye. Carter's own slogan may suffer from his scrupulous commitment to truth—“It's only morning before noon”—but he is a caring and decent man (with actual White House experience!) who has a long commitment to public service. His whole life has been unblemished, except for the recent revelations from Russian hackers that his high school nickname was “Potty Mouth.”

His opponent, on the other hand, is a vacuous public figure pandering to false nostalgia and misplaced pride. So vote for Jimmy Carter. Unless it's not 1980, in which case, never mind. ■

Ed Spivey Jr. is art director of Sojourners.

We don't usually endorse a candidate, but this time we have no choice.

of the consequences (a word that uses the letter “c” with laudable efficiency).

WE HAVE committed acts of civil disobedience before—getting arrested for protests against South African apartheid, the secret wars in Central America, and the immoral budget priorities of Congress, and, in a lesser known act of conscience, loudly objecting to the watered-down beverages on tap at our neighborhood bar. (Always the clever one in the group, I called it “tap water.”) The pizza was also horrible, but we let that one slide. The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. Unfortunately, justice is probably going to get bent long before they

Ken Davis

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Perhaps you've been inspired to work for racial justice in your community after reading *Sojourners'* coverage of racial justice and the church. Maybe you've found a new way to understand and talk about your faith. Or perhaps the biblical call to social justice has become foundational to your values.

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